Electronic Research Administration System Search Summary

Overview:

The Electronic Research Administration (eRA) System, Cayuse, is used primarily by the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) and faculty for contract and grant proposal and award processes, transactions and data. There have been negative impressions from both faculty and administrators in regards to Cayuse since its implementation in April 2015. While we have few specific complaints from faculty, the understanding is that they view the system as unwieldy. OSP staff complain of the inflexibility of the system and the need to have created many 'workarounds' in order to make it work for their needs. In response, the Office of Research (OR) considered evaluating other systems. When OSP was listed as one of the top five barriers in The Strategic Academic Plan Barrier Prioritization due to "cumbersome processes", the search for better software became a priority. Consequently, OR underwent a comprehensive search for an eRA System beginning in March 2019.

Currently OR uses only the proposal/award module in Cayuse. Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) modules, though available, have not yet been implemented. Cayuse does not currently have a Conflict of Interest (COI) module.

OSP and the Office of Research Compliance Administration (ORCA) anticipated procuring an improved and integrated Electronic Research Administration (eRA) SaaS solution to better streamline research administration processes, improve faculty experience and further reduce administrative burden.
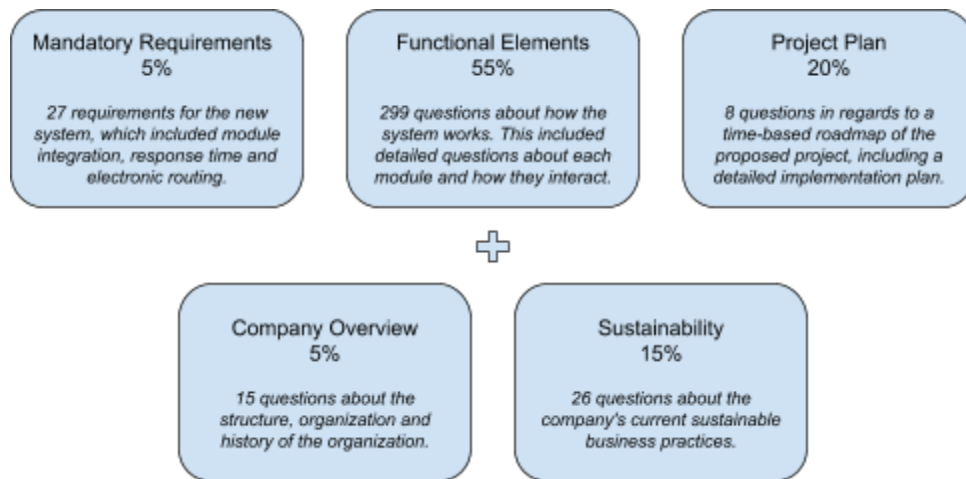
Initial Phase:

An advisory committee tasked with making a recommendation on the selection of grants administration software, led by Assistant Vice Chancellor Kate Aja and OR Project Coordinator Katy Wisuri, was formed to include faculty and staff members. VCR Scott Brandt and AVC Aja attended a February 2019 Committee on Research (COR) meeting requesting 2 representatives from the committee to participate. VCR Brandt also sent an email to the deans explaining the search process and the critical need for faculty input. He requested 2 to 3 faculty representatives from each division.

We received 1 nomination each from COR and Humanities, 2 from Social Sciences, 6 from Engineering, 10 from Physical & Biological Sciences and 0 from Arts. Of those nominations only 1 from Social Sciences, 1 from Engineering and 7 from Physical & Biological Sciences participated, as well as the COR and Humanities representatives. In addition to the nominations, we also received several volunteers from the COI and IACUC committees. In total we ended up with 15 faculty/user representatives and 10 staff research administrators.

eRA Software Systems Request for Proposal:

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was released in early March 2019 and closed 3 weeks later. Seven vendors applied. After scoring each of the 351 answers, three vendors (Huron, Streamlyne and Kuali Research) ranked highest in each of the areas covered by the RFP: Mandatory requirements, Functional elements, Project Plan, Company Overview and Sustainability. Cayuse did apply to the RFP but did not rank high enough to continue on to the next steps of the process.

Mandatory Requirements 5%	Functional Elements 55%	Project Plan 20%
27 requirements for the new system, which included module integration, response time and electronic routing.	299 questions about how the system works. This included detailed questions about each module and how they interact.	8 questions in regards to a time-based roadmap of the proposed project, including a detailed implementation plan.

Company Overview 5%	Sustainability 15%
15 questions about the structure, organization and history of the organization.	26 questions about the company's current sustainable business practices.

Scoring Scale

0 = Invalid, No Response or Unacceptable
1 = Does Not Meet Expectations
2 = Meets Expectations
3 = Exceeds Expectations
4 = Greatly Exceeds Expectations

	Initial Scores	
1	Streamlyne	2.380
2	Kuali	2.123
3	Huron	2.122
4	InfoED	1.940
5	iMedRIS	1.930
6	Cayuse	1.671
7	Key Solutions	1.526

Demonstrations:

The top three vendors were then invited to provide demonstrations of their software in April 2019. Each daylong scripted demo covered four modules (proposal and award, IRB, IACUC and FCOI) with separate sessions of each module for faculty/users and administrators. An advisory committee of 25 members (15 faculty/users and 10 staff research administrators) viewed and scored the module(s) most pertinent to their usage of a grants administration system. Anyone not able to attend in person was given the option to watch a recording of the segment(s). Scores were collected on numerous user and admin features, including ease of use, initiation and completion of a proposal, dashboard, form creation, tracking and review process.

Segment	Length	Faculty/Users			Admin Staff		
		Huron	Kuali	Streamlyne	Huron	Kuali	Streamlyne
Intro + General	15 min	10	11	9	4	5	5
Proposal/Award: User	45 min	10	11	9	4	5	5
COI: User	30 min	6	4	3	7	6	6
COI: Admin	45 min	1	1	1	5	5	5
Proposal/Award: Admin	120 min	0	0	0	4	4	4
IRB: User	45 min	0	0	0	3	3	3
IRB: Admin	60 min	0	0	0	3	3	3
IACUC: User	45 min	4	3	3	2	2	2
IACUC: Admin	60 min	3	3	3	2	2	2
Total per demo	**7 hours 45 min**						

Overall Scoring:
In addition to scoring RFP answers and the demos, technical interviews and references were also scored. Pricing, though not scored, also needed to be taken into consideration.

After all scoring was completed, Huron was found to be the top ranked software, followed by Streamlyne and Kuali Research. Kuali was omitted as an option at this point due to its ranking and, moreover, by concerns raised by our ITS representative regarding the ability to obtain data for the data warehouse. Kuali Research was unable to supply the required text files for the data warehouse environment. Consultants would more than likely be needed to work with this supplier on an ongoing basis.

Each vendor submitted three references and three of each of Huron's and Streamlyne's other customers were also selected for interviews. Of these, Huron's three suggested references and two other customers were interviewed. We were only able to connect with two of Streamlyne's submitted references and two of their other clients.

Our goal was to speak with the compliance office and sponsored projects office for each client. For Huron we were able to speak with both offices for two of the clients, only the compliance office for two and only the sponsored projects office for the remaining one. This was mostly due to the fact that only compliance modules had been implemented for the two clients and the compliance office was unavailable for comment on the last. For Streamlyne we were only able to speak with the sponsored projects office at each. This was partly due to the compliance modules not being used at two of the clients and no one being available for comment at the third. The sponsored projects director at the fourth ended up being part of the IRB committee at that institution, so we were able to receive feedback from both perspectives in the one interview.

Huron references were mostly positive, though implementation was arduous, and there was limited system-to-system functionality. Some felt the software lacked intuitiveness.

Interviews with Streamlyne's customers caused concerns. While their customer service was ranked high, the system was described as unintuitive and confusing. One client was unable to use the system-to-system feature.
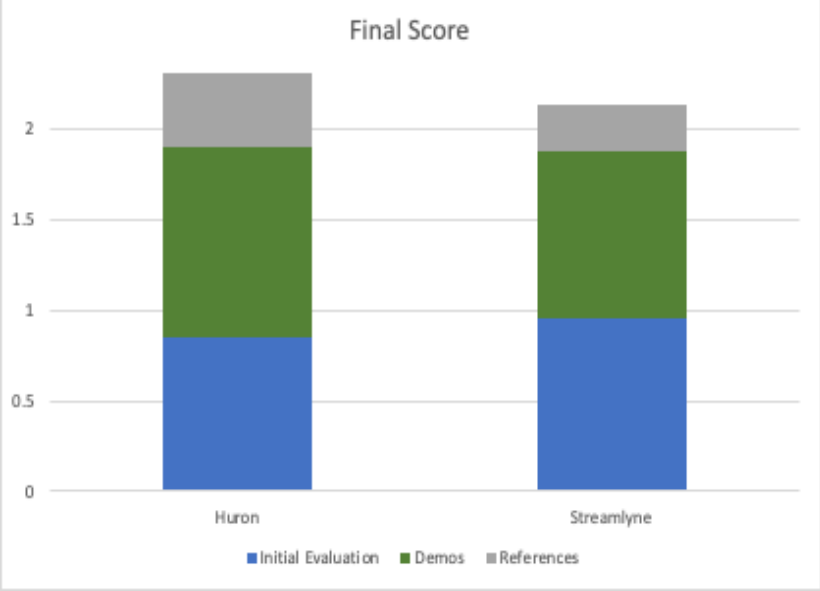
Pricing

	Implementation	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Huron	$1,577,390	$228,667	$421,885	$538,330	$584,832	$594,636
Streamlyne	$135,000	$164,724	$171,312	$178,165	$185,292	$192,704

Cayuse currently costs $144K annually. To implement the compliance modules would mean an estimated additional $65k per year (based on 2014 quote).

Outcome:

The committee convened to discuss final steps in early May 2019 (staff members and faculty/user representatives met separately). The outcome from discussions confirmed that Huron was the committee's top software choice, but the cost was seen as exorbitant. Procurement approached Huron to ask about possible cost cuts. They responded that implementation costs could be cut in half but only if we accepted their standard product (i.e., no configurations), which would not be acceptable.
Staff viewed a new system more positively than faculty, however, taking all factors into consideration, none of the software was considered significantly better than Cayuse.
Faculty unanimously agreed that additional staff support would be the preferred resource over a change in software. Cases were made for additional support in the divisions in the way of administrative assistance in completing information in Cayuse, completing forms (current and pending support, for example) and compiling proposal documents. It was also suggested that additional support in the Office of Sponsored Projects would be more beneficial than a possibly less cumbersome but more expensive software system.

Next Steps:

We will work with faculty to gain more insight into their pain-points of the Cayuse system. Some faculty on the advisory committee commented that they would like a 'copy proposal' feature. Others expressed frustration that they cannot move between proposal questionnaire sections without completing and saving each section. Getting a better understanding of what they find cumbersome will be key before we meet with Cayuse to determine what can and cannot be improved for both faculty and staff users. Respondents provided extensive feedback regarding their issues with Cayuse in an SAP IWG subgroup survey on OSP services and we have requested this information.

Implementation of Cayuse compliance modules will begin FY20.