State-of-the-art research e-system launched at the University of Guelph

By Liz Snyder

The Office of Research has launched a new project to implement a state-of-the art database and web portal that is accessible 24/7 from anywhere in the world.

This new system – currently named Research Administration and Information Management System (RAIMS) -- will replace the University of Guelph's current electronic and paper-based manual systems.

Malcolm Campbell, vice-president of research says RAIMS will elevate the administration of research at the UofG.

"Converting the system is a fantastic step forward. RAIMS will provide tangible benefits to all stakeholders actively engaged in our research enterprise," said Campbell.

Ken Hough, director for the OMAFRA – UofG Agreement says one of these benefits is that RAIMS will house data from the inception of a proposal to the completion of a project, making it easier and less time-consuming to track information – such as approvals, animal use protocols, ethics approval and biosafety permits -- associated with the project.

"I think the most exciting part is to have the administration and the application and the review processes for research proposals and programs, all in one system," said Hough.

 Faculty will be able to use historical data, such as previous proposals, for new and future funding opportunities – all within the single sign-on system.

Another benefit will be the ability for decision makers at the college and department level to access data when they need it, says Leigh West, research manager in OAC. "The power of real-time research analytics, having the ability to make ad hoc reports -- in terms of decision making within our college – will be extremely beneficial," she said.

RAIMS was announced at a kick-off event on October 2, 2015. Members of the University of Guelph community were invited to learn more about the system and meet the project team, including representatives from InfoEd, the company providing the software.

RAIMS Project Team including representatives from the University of Guelph and InfoEd Global

"Our company is completely dedicated to research administration and we have a client base around the world that you're connected to now," said Eddie Johnson, Jr., president of InfoEd.

Lena Levison, a veterinarian in Animal Care Services says this connection is a big plus. "It's great that it's already utilized in other institutions as we'll be able to learn from their best practices but still able to configure it specifically to the University of Guelph's needs," she said.

Arvinder Magon, project manager for RAIMS, says the implementation team has created a plan to make the introduction of RAIMS as smooth as possible.

"Communication is key for this project," she says. "We've reached out to stakeholders to see what information they need. We're looking for feedback and input to ensure their expectations are met."

RAIMS will be rolled out in phases over the next two years. The first section will be ethics, followed by grants and contracts, animal care and environmental health and safety.

The project team launched a contest to find a fitting and catchy name for the system in September.

For more information about this project, see the newly launched RAIMS website , or contact Magon at amagon@uoguelph.ca.
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