Action Plan: **Grant and Contract Accounting (GCA) Budget Set-Up**
March 2012

Challenge

In late 2011, GCA Campus Services staffing dropped to an unprecedented low of 67% of maximum capacity resulting in significant delays in processing. During this period, GCA identified budget set-up timeliness as the most significant issue requiring priority attention. As of March 2012, GCA staffing capacity has been restored to 91% allowing us to address this issue with a target of clearing the backlog by April 30, 2012.

As of March 13, 2012, GCA had the following backlog of Funding Actions (FAs) and Post Award Changes (PACs) pending:

202	FA-New
82	FA-Renewal
279	FA-Supplement
63	FA-Supplement/Extension
479	PAC (extensions, deobligations, rebudgeting, restriction releases, early terminations, etc)
1105	Total

The above actions do not include advance and sub budgets because they are not processed entirely through SERA. Advance and sub budgets will be worked on in the same overall priority (new, renewal, supplements).

Actions

GCA reallocated staff, doubling the number of staff in the unit that handles budget set-up processes. The most experienced staff have been moved into critical roles setting up new and renewal budgets, ensuring quality at inception. Newer staff are being utilized in some of the more routine processing roles and for some of the more routine tasks (e.g. supplements, extensions).

Priorities

We are approaching the backlog in the following priority order:

1. New and Renewal Budgets
2. Extensions and Supplement/Extensions
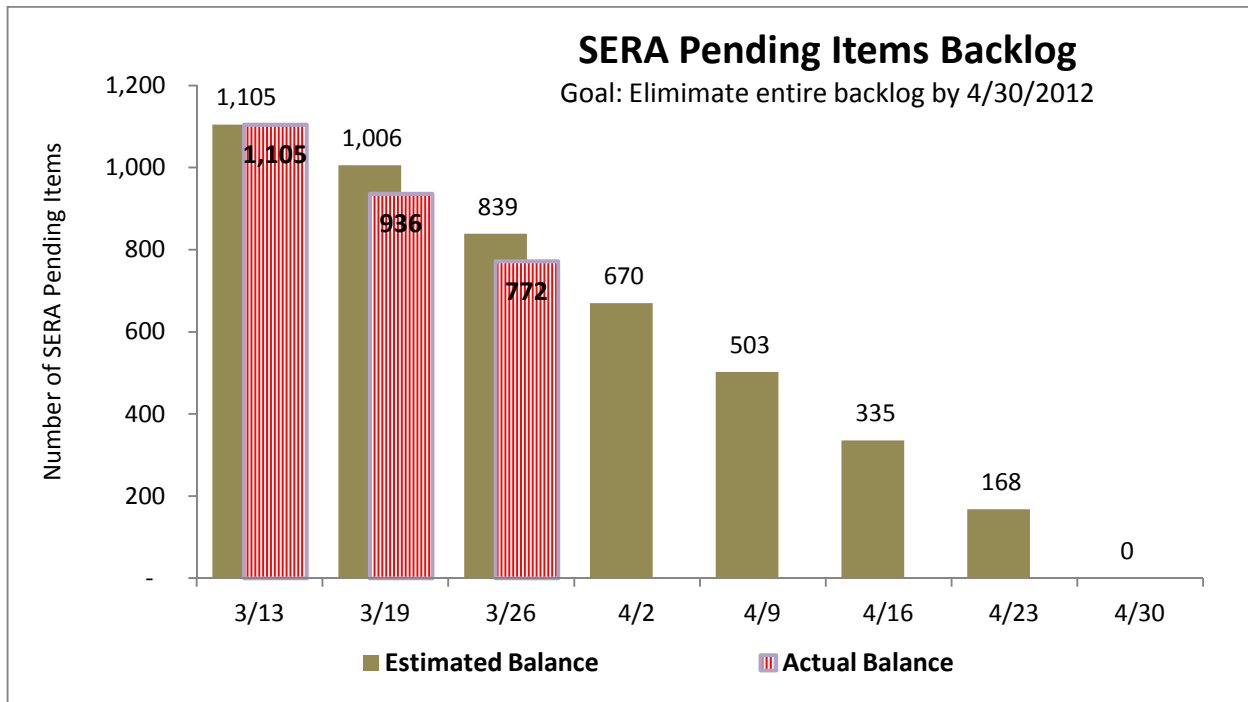3. Supplements and Post Award Changes

Within each of those categories, we will be working through the list on a first-in-first-out basis. Exceptions to be expedited include:

- Leading up to payroll cut-off dates, new or renewal budgets starting during that payroll period
- Grants whose award period is six months or less
- Grants that arrive well into the budget period and are already nearing their end date

Although New and Renewal budgets are our highest priority, we also plan to use our less senior staff who have been trained on supplements, supplement/extensions, and Post Award Changes to make steady progress on those. We recognize that the delay in processing supplements may result in some budgets appearing to be in deficit. This does not impact a department's ability to spend on the budget and accurate funded levels will be reflected soon.

Goals

At this time of the year, GCA receives 37 Funding Actions and Post Award Changes on *average* per day from the Office of Sponsored Programs. GCA's goal is to completely eliminate this backlog by the end of April. In order to do that, the daily goal is to process a combination of 70 FAs and PACs , reducing the backlog by 33, on average, per day.

SERA Pending Items Backlog
Goal: Elimimate entire backlog by 4/30/2012

Number of SERA Pending Items

Date	Estimated Balance	Actual Balance
3/13	1,105	1,105
3/19	1,006	936
3/26	839	772
4/2	670	
4/9	503	
4/16	335	
4/23	168	
4/30	0	

■ Estimated Balance   ▥ Actual Balance

In an effort to account for unforeseen circumstances (both positive and negative) and daily flux of incoming volume, we project that the backlog will be eliminated between the week of April 16th at the earliest and the week of May 14th at the latest. Since new and renewal budgets are first priority, the backlog on those is expected to be caught up in late March or early April with a target after that for a 24-hour turnaround.

Communication

This action plan and weekly updates on progress will be shared with College Directors of Finance and Administration and posted to GCA's website. Background data and progress will also be provided at Monthly Research Administrator Meetings (MRAM).