

5. TRANSITION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Project EASI/ED is more than a system development project. EASI/ED objectives and the revisions made to the student aid delivery process (implemented through the EASI/ED system) will drive change throughout SFAP in terms of organization, roles and responsibility, performance measures, and service delivery and contract architectures. For the transition to EASI/ED to succeed, very strong program and project management is needed.

Program management encompasses oversight and control of multiple projects in support of a common mission or vision. Successful program management efforts share the characteristics listed below.

- Program objectives are clearly defined; project objectives support program objectives.
- Program manager is competent and has a level of skill that matches the size, nature and complexity of the program.
- Program and project teams are competent and have an appropriate mix of skills for the size, nature, and complexity of their areas of responsibility.
- The organization's top managers visibly support the program.
- Resources are sufficient, including staff, funding, materials, and time.
- Communication channels are well-defined and communication is active and encouraged.
- Appropriate controls are defined and used – e.g., performance metrics, change control, scope control, issue management, reviews, walkthroughs, steering committees.
- Systems for feedback are defined and used – e.g., progress monitoring, status reports, audits.

This section addresses the organization required to successfully lead the EASI/ED transition. It encompasses the organization with responsibility for EASI/ED program management – the Modernization Program Management Office (PMO) – and other SFAP elements responsible for key roles related to the transition. Subsection 5.1 presents the Transition Management Organization structure. Subsection 5.2 describes roles and responsibilities, including those for the PMO and for other SFAP managers integral to the transition.

5.1 Organizational Structure

EASI/ED requires an organization with authority to control the transition from two perspectives:

- **Program management** to act upon a comprehensive and integrated perspective for Project EASI/ED; and
- **Project management** to execute each project within Project EASI/ED based upon detailed knowledge of project issues, progress, and plans.

Figure 5-1 shows the Project EASI/ED Transition Management Organization. Solid vertical lines represent direct line authority. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for SFAP/Chief Operating Officer (COO) (referred to from here forward as the COO) has direct authority over Project EASI/ED and the six SFAP Services. The SFAP Service Directors will be responsible for day-to-day management of individual EASI/ED transition projects assigned to their organizations. Responsibility at this level may address an entire “project” as reflected in the *Transition Strategy*, Section 4 (e.g., an entire subsystem), or may address an element within one of these “projects.”

Solid horizontal lines represent staff relationships. Three staff organizations support the COO: the Modernization PMO; the Program Review Board (PRB), an advisory body that comprises the SFAP Service directors and other senior managers invited by the COO; and the Investment Review Board (IRB), which advises the COO regarding the selection, control and evaluation of information technology investments.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

This subsection identifies each key role in the EASI/ED Transition Management Organization, and lists the principal responsibilities associated with each role.

5.2.1 Program Sponsor

The COO is the EASI/ED program sponsor. The program sponsor is ultimately responsible for successful EASI/ED implementation. The program sponsor has the following responsibilities:

- Chairs the PRB and the IRB;
- Ensures adequate resources are available;
- Communicates EASI/ED progress and status of Project EASI/ED to internal and external stakeholders;
- Serves as Project EASI/ED champion and solicits stakeholder support for Project EASI/ED; and
- Manages stakeholder relationships with oversight bodies (e.g., Office of Management and Budget, Government Accounting Office, Congress).

5.2.2 Project EASI Steering Committee

The Project EASI Steering Committee comprises representatives of ED, the external postsecondary education community, and other Federal agencies. The Steering Committee is responsible for:

- Soliciting community responses regarding Project EASI;

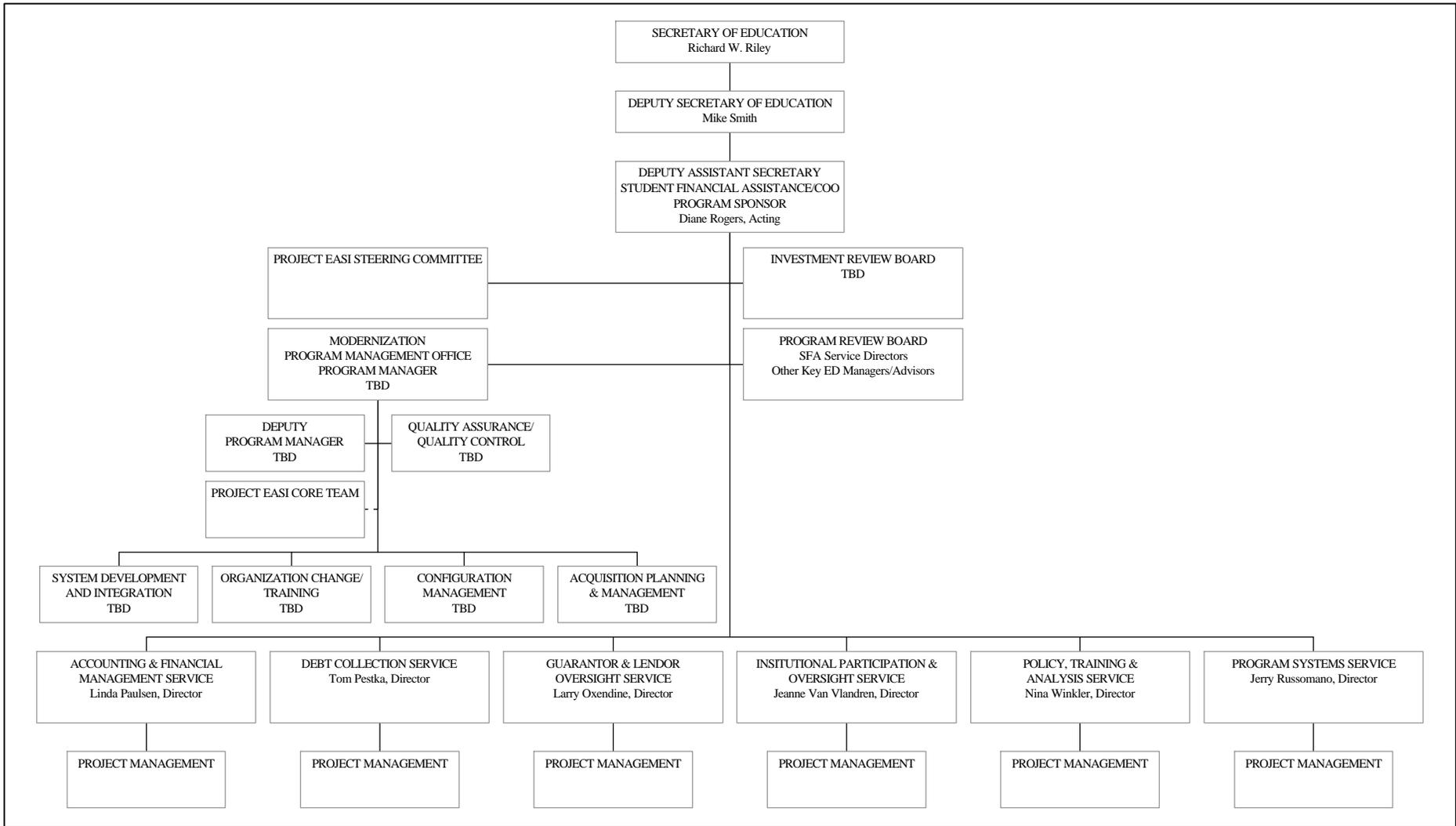


Figure 5-1 Transition Management Organization

- Helping resolve conflicts regarding Project EASI;
- Providing Project EASI vision, guidance, and support to ED and to the community;
- Facilitating communications between the community and ED regarding Project EASI concepts and issues;
- Monitoring Project EASI performance measures;
- Acting as advocates of Project EASI concepts to ED and to the community; and
- Helping to establish priorities for Project EASI.

Throughout the transition, the Steering Committee will act as an advisory body to the program sponsor. The PMO supported by the SFAP Service Directors and contractors make presentations to the Steering Committee as deemed appropriate by the program sponsor or at the request of the Steering Committee members.

5.2.3 Core Team

The Core Team, under the leadership of the Core Team Chair, is responsible for:

- Serving as national spokespersons for Project EASI and ensuring coverage at strategic community events and meetings;
- Acting as advocates of the Project EASI vision to the larger postsecondary education community and to ED;
- Coordinating with ED on Project EASI activities, issues, and vision;
- Conducting and organizing Project EASI team meetings; and
- Ensuring external community involvement at appropriate points throughout the rest of the Project EASI/ED life cycle (i.e., user interface development and design, user acceptance testing, and training).

5.2.4 Program Review Board

The PRB reviews EASI/ED progress and issues at major life cycle milestones and at other times as requested by the COO. Based on these reviews, the PRB recommends actions or decisions to the COO. The PRB will convene at the end of each phase of the Project EASI/ED development life cycle. The PRB will be briefed on progress to that point in relation to the Project EASI/ED Transition Strategy and outstanding issues or concerns with the effort. The PRB will make recommendations to the COO regarding whether to continue the implementation effort through the next phase of the life cycle, and regarding issues and concerns.

5.2.5 Investment Review Board

The IRB is responsible for selecting, evaluating and controlling information technology investments. The IRB will consist of the COO and the SFAP Service Directors. The IRB will convene regularly to review and decide upon proposals for major investments in information technology. Proposals may include requests for funds to support changes to ongoing systems, new systems, and research and development. IRB decisions regarding which proposals to fund will be based on the complete portfolio of SFAP information technology investments.

5.2.6 Modernization PMO

The Modernization PMO is responsible for program-level planning and oversight of Project EASI/ED. Within the PMO, the program manager heads the PMO and is responsible for the day-to-day activities across the program. For this program, the modernization program manager is the COO's representative to all SFAP managers and staff. A deputy program manager supports the program manager and handles administrative and staffing issues, budget, and ad hoc projects. The PMO is supported directly by program management teams for acquisition planning and management, systems development and integration, organizational change/training, configuration management and quality assurance and control.

One of the first tasks the program manager will need to complete is to staff the PMO. Having a strong PMO in place is critical to ED's ability to guide Project EASI/ED to a successful completion. Given its range and level of responsibilities, the PMO requires highly qualified staff with knowledge of SFAP business operations and with expertise in program management, system integration, organizational change, business process reengineering, investment management, and acquisition management. The PMO may be staffed with ED employees, contractors, or teams of ED employees and contractors. Until an integrator and other contractor support is available, ED needs to staff critical tasks in order to continue progress and maintain the momentum of Project EASI/ED.

Acquisition Planning and Management

Each acquisition identified in the *Transition Strategy* requires planning prior to starting the acquisition process. During the planning period, an acquisition team is responsible for defining the requirements for each acquisition. Once requirements are defined, the acquisition team is responsible for completing the steps in the acquisition process to include the steps listed below:

- Performing a cost/benefit analysis (to assess subsystem implementation options and to support full-and-open competitions);
- Writing a statement of work (SOW);
- Developing a Government independent cost estimate;
- Coordinating a SOW internally at ED;

- Obtaining a delegation of procurement authority, when required;
- Preparing an acquisition plan, when required;
- Publishing a Commerce Business Daily notice, when required;
- Conducting a pre-release review with prospective vendors;
- Distributing the RFP to prospective vendors;
- Receiving and responding to questions;
- Receiving and evaluating proposals;
- Negotiating contract issues prior to award; and
- Awarding a contract.

System Development and Integration

The System Development and Integration team serves as the unifying force across the EASI/ED transition. A strong integrator, in place from the beginning of the transition, is critical to holding the disparate projects and subprojects involved in implementing EASI/ED together. The integrator is responsible for ensuring the system-wide integrity of the EASI/ED design, and for ensuring that that integrity is not compromised as components of EASI/ED are implemented. In addition to an ongoing responsibility for managing the EASI/ED system-wide design and architecture, the integrator is responsible for the following system-wide activities as described in Section 4:

- Defining EASI/ED system-wide security requirements;
- Performing transaction path and usage analysis;
- Defining performance requirements;
- Defining application development standards and architecture management strategy;
- Defining a data conversion strategy;
- Performing data mapping between the current Title IV systems and the EASI/ED Logical Data Model;
- Defining an interface strategy and a set of standards;
- Defining a bridging strategy;
- Defining user interface standards;
- Improving data quality;

- Assessing capacity and sizing requirements;
- Designing system-wide security;
- Developing a test strategy; and
- Designing the technical environment;

The integrator also assists the PMO with program management activities including:

- Performing project and program planning, schedule development and coordination, progress monitoring, production planning and monitoring; and
- Identifying, tracking, and resolving program-level issues and project-level issues that remain unresolved beyond a specified window or that cannot be resolved by the project team.

The system development and integration team works closely with the SFAP managers responsible for Project EASI/ED projects to ensure a coordinated and integrated management approach.

Organizational Change/Training

Working with an organization change contractor, the integrator, and key SFAP managers, the organizational change/training team ensures the organizational change is planned and developed. Once plans are in place, the organizational change/training team is responsible for overseeing the roll-out of the revised SFAP organization and business processes in conjunction with the roll-out of the system. As a part of planning and implementing the organizational change transition, the organizational change/training team is responsible for conducting a skills assessment, identifying training needs, and overseeing training development and implementation for staff in new jobs.

Configuration Management

The configuration management team provides configuration management support throughout the Project EASI/ED implementation effort to control changes to both the current Title IV systems and to EASI/ED functionality. The integrator fills the role of configuration management and is responsible for performing the following tasks:

- Planning and implementing configuration management procedures and supporting tools for Project EASI/ED configuration management;
- Establishing standards for configuration management across all systems;
- Supporting and performing cross-component configuration management; and
- Defining development, documentation, and other operational standards.

Quality Assurance and Control

An Independent Validation and Verification (IV&V) contractor provides quality assurance and control for Project EASI/ED. The IV&V contractor is responsible for:

- Reviewing test plans for pre-delivery testing;
- Reviewing user documentation, training documentation, and other documentation for consistency and quality;
- Developing performance measures, gathering data, and monitoring performance (working in conjunction with ED managers and with other ED contractors);
- Evaluating compliance with standards;
- Providing quality control support, and establishing overall quality control and quality assurance standards and guidelines; and
- Providing quality assurance and quality control training.

Project Management

Projects (as defined in Section 4) are executed within the SFAP Services. The SFAP Service directors responsible for a given project will assign the project manager. Each project manager is responsible for the following activities:

- Supporting the PMO in planning and executing acquisition(s) for each project;
- Managing project performance to ensure that projects are on time, within budget and built to the appropriate requirements;
- Reporting status and issues to the PMO;
- Managing the project from the contract or task order award through implementation;
- Obtaining needed resources;
- Reviewing work products for acceptance;
- Identifying, tracking and resolving project issues;
- Participating in program-level discussions regarding status, issues, and risk, to contribute to program-wide solutions;
- Identifying and managing project risk;
- Identifying program-level issues and risks to the PMO; and

- Preparing and providing change requests/proposals to the PMO.

5.2.7 Management Process Flows

The PMO, project managers and the PRB work closely to support Project EASI/ED program management. As a team, the SFA Services and the PMO manage day to day activities at both the project and program level. Figure 5-2 shows an overview of the flows between program and project management. Starting at the bottom of the figure, the outputs of project management (i.e., changes, issues, risks, status, and change proposals) are escalated to the program management teams. The PMO shares program information with the PRB for review, comment, and recommendations. If changes are proposed that require additional funds, the PMO shares the change proposals with the IRB for consideration and returns an approval or rejection of the proposal.

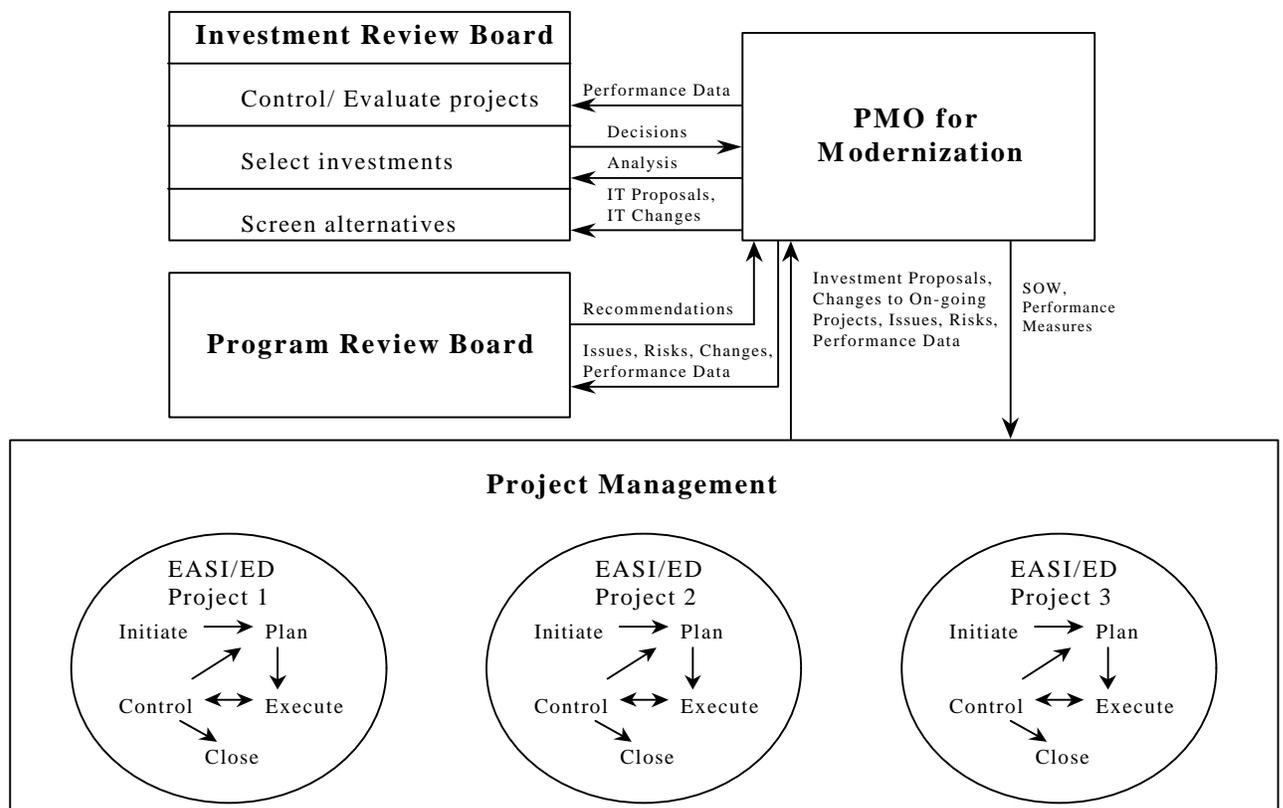


Figure 5-1 Management Process Flows