Technology Committee Meeting


Absent: Cynthia Nesbit, Norman Fournier and Lyndel Wishcamper.

Trustee McCarthy called the meeting to order.

OnlineMaine. Chancellor Pattenaude explained OnlineMaine. The UMS is establishing OnlineMaine, a registered website acting as the primary gateway for the University System’s online programs. The operation of OnlineMaine will be a distinct function within University College that oversees and supports all validated online programs. Online programs will utilize standardized policies and procedures and all academic majors that are offered 100% online and listed on the website must go through a validation process. The guiding principles for OnlineMaine are as follows:

- encourage the establishment of quality and viable online academic programs that promote student success;
- promote and advertise state-wide an integrated university that enhances access;
- ensure appropriate support services for online students and faculty;
- make certain that the expansion of online capacity is cost effective;
- encourage collaboration among universities to ensure efficient delivery of programs
- standardize policies and practices system-wide;
- minimize approval process to promote nimbleness and flexibility; and
- no program can be called “online” unless it is validated by the established process.

Presentation by Collegiate Project Services. Ed Cornelius, Brian Ellis and Matt Combs from Collegiate Project Services (CPS) presented the final report on the assessment of portal options. CPS was contracted to assess the UMS needs and requirements for a System-wide portal, research various portal options, and recommend one or more options that will meet the UMS needs. A portal creates a common gateway to the data and services that the students, faculty, staff and administration need to effectively share information, deliver services more efficiently and work
together on projects. The benefits of a portal are it will save time, increase student engagement, facilitate anytime-anywhere learning, help to make better decisions, allow the faculty to focus on research and instruction, streamline administrative tasks, and connect with the UMS community.

CPS collected data through focus group sessions, on online survey, and input from portal vendors. There were 9 focus group sessions with participants from all seven campuses including faculty, students, administrative staff, technical staff, and subject matter experts. There were 1191 participants in the online survey which included students, faculty, administrative staff and technical staff. Fifteen vendors submitted information on costs, timeline, functionality, and other factors. CPS indentified the strongest needs to be the following:

- The portal must make navigating from one resource to the other more efficient and more user friendly.
- The portal must allow for campus specific branding and personalization of content and capabilities.
- The portal must allow for distributed administration even when centrally hosted.
- The portal should allow for users with multiple campus relationships and multiple roles.
- The portal needs to include more collaborative tools or features to facilitate communication.
- The portal must integrate with critical administrative systems to trigger alerts and notification to relevant users.

From the five categories of portals recognized in the industry, CPS determined that a Turnkey Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) portal (Peoplesoft) or a Turnkey Non-Profit Consortium (Liferay-CampusEAI) would be the best solutions for the UMS. These two categories have the lowest total cost of ownership over five years which would be in the range of $3.5 to $4 million. Total costs of the other portal options would be in the range of $5 to $13 million. CPS recommended UMS make a choice between relying on a well regarded commercial product (Peoplesoft) and a well regarded “open source” product (Liferay). Both have pros and cons and the UMS has experience with both products. The total cost of ownership over time is fairly similar and the risk factors are equal.

The Committee had a general discussion on cost, staffing, and risk comparisons of the two suggested models. Ms. Rebecca Wyke, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and Treasurer, explained the next step will be to develop a business case which will include the information technology priorities, strategic direction, proposed funding mechanism, linking the portal to the New Challenges, New Directions initiative, and the appropriate governance structure. Trustee McCarthy thanked the Collegiate Project Services staff for their presentation and thanked the Committee members as well as the campus staff for participating in the meeting.

Adjournment

Ellen Doughty for
J. Kelley Wiltbank, Clerk of the Board