

## **October 5, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

In attendance: Alyce DeMarais, Steve Renker, Jeff Tepper, Jason Sawin, Jane Carlin, Tim Hoyt, Pierre Ly, Mark Reinitz, Jennifer Neighbors, Ariela Tubert, William Morse, Cindy Riche

Minutes from Sept 21 meeting were approved.

### **I. Presentation of the ERP project**

Steve Renker, director of Enterprise Information Systems, gave a presentation of the new ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) project. A public version of the powerpoint slides will be available online shortly.

First, Steve explained what an ERP is. Then he clarified how our current system, Cascade Web, works and the challenges it faces. He convinced the committee that change is necessary and presented the time line for the ERP project.

An ERP allows users to perform standard functions for business operations electronically. This includes: transaction systems; data reporting and analysis, self-service (such as student registration, employment information, etc.); workflow management (an ERP helps coordinate the actions of different services toward a specific objective, such as a new employee's orientation); data interchange with third parties; dealing with privacy and security issues.

Our current self-service portal, Cascade Web, was homegrown in the 1990s. It has many components, all connected in complex ways (Jeff observed that we, users, are not even aware of how complex it is, since we only use a small part of it). Maintaining the relationships between all components of the system requires a lot of work. With the new system, the structure will be greatly streamlined.

Cascade presents a number of important challenges for Puget Sound:

- Difficulty to keep the system current based on changes in regulatory requirements. Failure to comply in certain areas may lead to the loss state funding for the college.
- Many processes are not yet automated. We still use a lot of paper files and input data by hand in a piecemeal manner. This is labor intensive and inefficient.
- Lack of flexibility to meet the changing needs of users. The ERP team at Puget Sound currently has a 3-year backlog of projects. Too much time has to be devoted to maintenance, rather than development of new features beneficial to users.
- Incomplete data sharing between systems. This is inefficient.
- Competitive disadvantage with some of our peer institutions in what our system offers its users.

The new ERP will help Puget Sound tackle all the above challenges. For example, it will empower departments to implement decisions without having to wait for programming.

The President's cabinet oversees the project. An ERP steering committee reports to the President's cabinet. Faculty are an important part of the process, input generated through the recent ERP survey will be used.

The project is currently in its Readiness Assessment phase. The plan is to have a vendor selected, and a partner for implementation by the end of summer 2011. Then, there will be a rolling implementation over 2-3 years.

For more on the project from the point of view of Collegiate Project Services, we can refer to the following webpage: <http://www.collegiateproject.com/pugetsound/>

### **Q&A:**

Mark Reinitz asked how much the project would cost. William Morse noted this was also the first question the Board of Trustees asked after the presentation. It is difficult to give an exact cost estimate now. First, the team needs to estimate a realistic budget given the needs of the college. We will have a better idea in May 2011. The cost will be in the millions, though not in the tens of millions. The project will be up for approval only once the funding needs are clear. The budget plan will include staffing and support needed for implementation.

This is an expensive project, but it is absolutely necessary to do it, given the problems with Cascade. For example, the difficulty to keep current with regulatory requirement is a very serious issue. Moreover, our financial aid system lacks flexibility and cannot be easily adapted to remain competitive with our peer institutions.

Tim Hoyt asked if it would change the face of Puget Sound's website. William explained that the website and the ERP are two separate things. The new ERP will have much more to offer than Cascade. Jeff asked for some examples of the new features:

The retention committee could use an ERP to detect students in trouble earlier and more efficiently.

Students could simulate potential majors and changes they are considering in their curriculum path, beyond the template major previous we currently see on Cascade.

Mark pointed out that in his understanding, the new system would mostly replicate a lot of what is already done through Cascade, but it will be much more efficient. Alyce added that many inefficiencies would be eliminated, allowing the college to save on paper and maintenance, and allocate its labor resources more productively. For example, it would free up time for developers to... develop, rather than maintain.

Jason Sawin asked if we already had a shortlist of vendors, as he has previous experience working with one of the systems mentioned by William. William replied that the team will stick with vendors that have a lot of experience and a record of excellence. All companies have pros and cons, and the team will make the best possible choice. It is important because we will most likely live with the new system for 20 years.

Mark asked how security is monitored in general, how hackers are detected. William said it was based on a multilayered approach, involving staff working on monitoring, as well as having good systems in place such as anti-virus, etc. However, we don't currently have a team working full time on security issues. Most security problems we face are not hacking, William explained, but the fact that some people may find themselves accessing features they are not allowed to use. For example, someone could use your computer if you don't log off before you leave your office. Or a student assistant using one of your machines without supervision could accidentally access features only you should be able to reach.

**Conclusion:** After the presentation, the committee is convinced that we need a new ERP. Our system is clearly out of date and inefficient.

## **II. Update from Alyce on Print management**

Alyce emphasized the need to address students' concern that they would lose free printing. We will have to explain that they will not lose it, but there will be limits.

Jane : "it will be challenging to educate" students on this issue. Most students support the idea when asked, but they continue printing anyway. There is a rationale for restrictions on the use of free printing, as persuasion alone won't work.

Jason suggested that for public relations reason on this project, it may be good to have restrictions on printing apply to all users, including faculty, not just students. Otherwise it is hard to sell as a university issue. William Morse explained that having limitations for faculty and all offices would be more costly. Currently, the plan is to monitor the printers that students use, such as those in the library. Additional monitoring would cost.

**The next meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2010.**

**Meeting adjourned at 10am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Pierre Ly