

## PACE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE

Through funding by the Department of Higher Education, PACE issued an RFP in February, 2013 for an Information Technology (IT) Assessment of the 24 PACE member institutions. This assessment of current services, systems and practices would include recommendations to improve organization of IT services, improve the operation of IT services, identify optimal sourcing strategies and design of a funding model that promotes effective use of IT resources across the campuses. Further recommendations include evaluation of enterprise resource planning software (ERP), and related dependent systems; broadband usage and opportunities; pertinent and effective use of cloud services; and optimizing the use of local area campus networks.

Following a competitive RFP evaluation, Berry Dunn was selected in April 2013 to conduct the IT assessment for the 24 institutions.

### The focus of the work was to identify the following key elements:

- Identify cost savings opportunities
- Improve operating efficiencies
- Identify recommendations that benefit from both shared and local services
- Optimize IT investments
- Outline an implementation plan that provides a framework for implementing the recommendations

The Berry Dunn IT Assessment Report was completed in June 2013 and identified 15 opportunities for consideration grouped into five categories:

- Professional development
- Coordinated Purchasing
- Shared Services
- Improved Data Standards and Information Sharing
- Enterprise Application and Business Process Improvements

To assist the PACE Steering Committee in assessing the Berry Dunn report and setting priorities, a PACE IT Steering Committee was created. The Committee is Chaired by the Vice-Chair of the PACE Steering Committee and consists of four members representing Community Colleges and four members representing State Universities.

### Members of the PACE IT Steering Committee are:

- ❖ **President William Messner** of Holyoke Community College, Chair;
- ❖ **Mike Assaf**, CIO Greenfield Community College;
- ❖ **Jeff Bickford**, CIO Northern Essex Community College;
- ❖ **Bill Fogarty**, VP Administration and Finance Holyoke Community College;
- ❖ **Jo-Ann Pelletier**, CIO Bristol Community College;
- ❖ **Patricia Ainsworth**, CIO Salem State University;
- ❖ **Pat Cronin**, CIO Bridgewater State University;
- ❖ **Kurt Steinburg**, Executive VP Massachusetts College of Art and Design,
- ❖ **Steve Swartz**, CIO Fitchburg State University,
- ❖ **Judith Silvia**, Executive Director of PACE, and
- ❖ **Betty Ann Learned**, Assistant Executive Director of PACE

The PACE IT Steering Committee prioritized the following recommendations which are well underway:

1. Professional Development and Shared Training
2. Creation of an IT Purchasing Position
3. Development of an overall ERP Strategy
4. Development of an RFP for a Security Posture Assessment.

### Professional Development and Shared Training

The Massachusetts State University and Community Colleges CIO Council created a list of professional development and shared training opportunities. They work together to negotiate better training rates and centralize training locations. This collaborative approach to professional development and training results in reduced training and travel costs for employees and creates the opportunity for professional relationships to be developed among the institutions. These relationships help foster some standardization among the institutions, allow for the easy sharing of best practices and give the technical staff another line of support/advice when needed.

### Creation of an IT Purchasing Director Position

This position will provide support and central coordination for IT procurement activity for all of the 24 PACE member institutions. As a first project, the PACE IT Steering Committee determined that a focus on existing software contracts may provide opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings in the near term. The agreements will be collated, organized and reviewed, documenting the contract terms. The contract timeline, renewal date(s), contract amount and details of the licensing agreements will provide a current statewide profile of

software in use and identify best prospects for collaborative purchasing and vendor negotiation. Leverage can be gained either through economies of scale, or from using the contract pricing information from multiple colleges and universities. Comparison of contract timelines and renewals will identify opportunities for moving contracts to co-terminus renewal dates.

### Development of an ERP Strategy

The PACE IT Steering Committee and the PACE Steering Committee have been discussing ERP solutions and the best path forward. The group determined that the first task is to develop an ERP Strategy, including but not limited to, an in depth look at open source opportunities, lessons learned, cost to implement, cost savings, flexibility and timelines.

### Security Posture Assessment

The Security Posture Assessment RFP was released on December 13, 2013, and is requesting proposals from security consulting firms for an information security assessment of each of the 24 institutions (see PACE RFP IT 002). With funding from the DHE, the selected vendor will review all facets of information security. The goal of the information security assessment is to identify the security posture of each institution along with any remediation plans. PACE plans to have the selected vendor on board by early March.

The PACE IT Steering Committee will continue to assess and prioritize the recommendations presented in the Berry Dunn IT Report as well as other options. Working collaboratively with the member institutions, a roadmap will be developed outlining short and long-term opportunities.