

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Learning Management System

Project No. 10-12

April 22, 2010

To: All Prospective Respondents

From: Houston Community College, Procurement Operations

Subject: Informational Letter #1 – The following questions were received in Procurement Operations within the time period specified in the solicitation document Request for Proposals (RFP) for Learning Management System (#10-12).

Question #1:

On Attachment No. 2 (Schedule of Items and Prices for Learning Management System), should the proposed cost total include pricing for a 3 year agreement or should the pricing indicate the cost for a one year agreement

HC Answer:

Three years. (Please refer to Amendment No. 001).

Question #2:

Given the student enrollment information, should pricing be scoped upon a certain number of max licenses or should pricing be scoped upon unlimited number of licenses?

HCC Answer:

Pricing structure is at the sole discretion of the respondents.

Question #3:

What is the full time enrollment (FTE) of HCCS?

HCC Answer:

Fall 2009 FTE, based on SCH and FTE and according to our Office of Institutional Research, is 36,038.

Question #4:

Has a date been established for when the RFP award will be announced?

HCC Answer:

Not at this time.

Question #5:

How many users does HCC foresee having each year during the course of the 3-year contract?

HCC Answer:

Approximately 60K per semester w/ anticipated growth of approximately 15% per year.

Question #6:

How many courses does HCC currently have in Blackboard? What is the average size? What is the smallest? What is the largest?

HCC Answer:

Currently 2500 course sections - Approximately 26 - 6-7 - Approximately 70

Question #7:

Regarding HCC's request for a "universally accessible development area," is HCC referring to a development/test/sandbox site? Please define what HCC means by development.

HCC Answer:

Yes. A development/test server site separate from the production course server(s).

Question #8:

In reference to attachment 3, section 2D, please describe what HCC means by "course modules."

HCC Answer:

Learning or content modules. A way for sectioning or chaptering sections of a course (including text, video, audio, discussion, etc.).

Question #9:

Please clarify how HCC defines widgets and identify what kind of widgets HCC currently uses. Can you give an example or two of a widget?

HCC Answer:

A small application which sits within a larger application or page and adds functionality (such as external content or services). Google Toolbar is an example of a widget.

Question #10:

What are your top 3 reasons for evaluating a new solution? (e.g. support, cost, functionality)

HCC Answer:

Currently used application will be shelved starting in 2013.

Question #11:

Please describe the level of interoperability desired with Microsoft Exchange e-mail system. What does HCC wish to be able to do?

HCC Answer:

HCC prefers to have the potential vendor describe what they have done in this area in the proposal submission documents.

Question #12:

Blackboard Connect ED – is HCC looking to find out if Moodlerooms has an alternative functionality or does HCC wish to continue using Bb Connect in conjunction with a new LMS?

HCC Answer:

HCC wishes to continue with Bb Connect.

Question #13:

Please describe more specifically what information HCC wishes to get from retention reports and grade distribution reports.

HCC Answer:

Standard grade distributions. Generally, comparisons from term to term (by course, college, program, instructor, etc.) Generally, integration with PeopleSoft student information data to create reports.

Question #14:

Please describe HCC's desired timeline for going live. Will there be a pilot period?

HCC Answer:

Start in spring, 2011. Complete transition by spring, 2012. Yes.

Question #15:

Referring to the request to interface with external content repositories, please provide examples what HCC means by XML protocols. Is HCC looking to interface with a specific repository?

HCC Answer:

Functionality with common/standard API's (e.g., Kaltura).

Question #16:

Please clarify what type of user-specific modifications HCC is referring to in terms of 508/ADA compliance

HCC Answer:

Please refer to the following website for guidelines: <http://projectone.cannect.org/appendix.php>

Question #17:

Does HCC have a specific PowerPoint conversion tool that it wishes to integrate with, or are you simply looking to understand if our LMS supports the file types most commonly used by converted PowerPoint?

HCC Answer:

HCC is looking for an LMS to support the file types most commonly used by converted PowerPoints.

Question #18:

In reference to HCC's request for the ability to allow the use of widgets and other types of embedded XML code, please clarify what specifically HCC wishes to do/use?

HCC Answer:

Many of these haven't been invented or created yet. Therefore, HCC wants functionality with common web API's on an ongoing basis. HCC wants a system that meets generally acknowledged or accepted standards.

Question #19:

In the RFP you state "Distance Education (DE) enrollment, and online enrollment in general, has grown tremendously at HCC. This academic year, Distance Education alone will enroll close to 40,000 individual students with well over 60,000 course registrations in approximately 2,500 sections. More students, enrolled in both hybrid and web-enhanced courses, also use the Learning Management System." What is the anticipated usage in year one, two, and three? The usage will one way to develop and determine a cost model.

HCC Answer:

Please see response to Question #5.

Question #20:

Are you looking for a system to replace your current Blackboard solution or compliment it? Will the proposed system be used to serve the same audience as Blackboard or an alternative one?

HCC Answer:

HCC is looking to replace its current system. Same audience.

Question #21:

Could HCC please clarify what they mean by “Does the system provide secure file import and export capabilities?”

HCC Answer:

HCC wants to ensure that all files transferred are on a secured (SSL/SSH) encrypted socket layer.

Question #22:

What role does PeopleSoft play in Admissions and Registration?

HCC Answer:

PeopleSoft is the system HCC uses for all storage and retrieval of most student information. The LMS must interface with PeopleSoft.

Question #23:

What software is used currently to enroll students in courses and sections?

HCC Answer:

PeopleSoft.

Question #24:

Is your current enrollment solution having issues with the Distance Ed or online courses and sections?

HCC Answer:

On occasion, but this is not common.

Question #25:

Approximately how many staff will need to be trained to use the system?

HCC Answer:

Including faculty, over a thousand.

Question #26:

How many faculty do you see as doing online courses?

HCC Answer:

Eventually over 1000.

Question #27:

Is PeopleSoft ID going to be the main identifier?

HCC Answer:

No, Active Directory will do that.

Question #28:

Are there legacy systems that interface with the data from the solution?

HCC Answer:

PeopleSoft.

Question #29:

Do you provide on line courses for faculty and staff for professional development? If so how?

HCC Answer:

Yes, via the learning management system.

Question #30:

What resources from HCC will be dedicated to the implementation and support of this project?

HCC Answer:

This depends on the proposal and services offered by it. Much of this will be determined by whether HCC chooses to self-host and/or provide its own help desk support or whether these services are outsourced

Question #31:

What versions of PeopleSoft are you currently using and or plan to use over the next three years.

HCC Answer:

PeopleSoft 9 is currently used. There are no immediate plans to change.

Question #32:

Do you currently have your student system hosted or supported in house?

HCC Answer:

PeopleSoft is hosted in-house. The current LMS is hosted by the vendor.

Question #33:

If hosted will we be able to connect to the hosted systems in order to implement and maintain the LMS system

HCC Answer:

This would have to be determined by necessity.

Question #34:

What database platform are you currently using for your PeopleSoft system and would you like the learning management system to be on the same platform?

HCC Answer:

Oracle. Yes.

Question #35:

What role does Blackboard play on campus?

HCC Answer:

Student instruction. Blackboard Vista is the current institutionally-approved LMS.

Question #36:

Does your current Blackboard solution serve as your LMS?

HCC Answer:

Yes.

Question #37:

Does your current PeopleSoft software solution interface with Blackboard?

HCC Answer:

Yes, in a one way, batched mode.

Question #38:

Is the institution thinking of or prepared to remove Blackboard and go with another solution?

HCC Answer:

The institution will be replacing the current version of its LMS which is Blackboard Vista.

Question #39:

If we provide a tool chain for external customized report analysis, would that meet HCC needs?

HCC Answer:

The potential vendor should describe what they have done in this area in the proposal submission to HCC.

Question #40:

How does HCC want the new LMS to interface with PeopleSoft? Can you provide some details of the desired interface?

HCC Answer:

Some examples include transfer student enrollment upon registration in PeopleSoft, extract student grades from LMS to PeopleSoft, update student status and other information as it changes in PeopleSoft. However, the potential vendor should describe what they have done in this area in the proposal and how its product will interface with Peoplesoft.

Question #41:

In section 2 Faculty Requirements under section A Communication Tools, please state what you mean by “communication between courses”.

HCC Answer:

Primarily email and any other recommended communication tools from potential vendor.

Question #42:

In section 2 Faculty Requirements under section E Content Development tools the requirement “customizable according to industry standards,” is this referring to customization within widgets?

HCC Answer:

Yes.