

**PARTNERSHIP TO ADVANCE COLLABORATION AND EFFICIENCIES (PACE)**

**MARCH 18th, 2014**

**UPDATE**

PACE BACKGROUND

PACE is a collaborative initiative of the nine Massachusetts State Universities and 15 Massachusetts Community Colleges designed to promote cost savings and operational efficiencies, increase productivity and improve service delivery.

The PACE mission is to lead a systematic effort for campus collaborations which will benefit  each institution, their geographic region, and the Commonwealth by bolstering operational efficiencies, increasing productivity, and improving delivery of services to constituents.

The activities of PACE are directed by the PACE Steering Committee. The Committee consists of Three State University Presidents, Three Community College Presidents, The Executive Officer of the State University Council of Presidents; The Executive Officer of the Community College Council of Presidents; A representative of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, (ex officio) and the Executive Director of Pace (convener, ex officio).

Current Members of the PACE Steering Committee are:

* President Dana Mohler – Faria of Bridgewater State University , Chair;
* President William Messner of Holyoke Community College, Vice-Chair;
* President Daniel Asquino of Mount Wachusett Community College;
* President Mary Grant of Massachusetts College of Liber al Arts;
* President Patricia Meservey of Salem State University;
* President John Sbrega of Bristol Community College;
* Vincent Pedone, Executive Officer, College of Presidents;
* William Hart, Executive Officer, Massachusetts Community College Executive Office;
* Sean Nelson, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Higher Education (ex officio) and;
* Judith Silvia, Executive Director of PACE (ex officio).

The Committee’s shared belief is that a systematic mode of cooperation among Massachusetts state universities and community colleges carries with it tremendous benefits for each institution, its students and the public at large. By working together, the 24 institutions can bolster levels of efficiency, increase productivity, and improve the delivery of services to constituents. A collective commitment to collaboration and efficiency generates savings for every campus. These savings can be targeted to students in need of financial assistance making a college education both affordable and accessible.

Current PACE initiatives are focused on cooperative efforts aimed to increase joint purchasing, achieve savings, preserve resources, expand shared services, improve efficiencies and enhance the academic and social opportunities for students.

PACE is actively engaged with its member institutions in activities that will produce cost savings and efficiencies in the short and long-term.

**CURRENT PACE INITIAITVES**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE

Through funding by the Department of Higher Education (DHE), 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, and 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 received 20 proposals which were reviewed by members of the PACE IT Steering Committee. After an interview process, PACE selected McGladrey to do this work. Kick-off meetings are scheduled the first week of April followed by site visits to each campus.

INSURANCE AND BOOKSTORE ASSESSMENT

Insurance – Through a survey and analysis of the participating campuses, ARI Risk Management Consultants concluded a risk and insurance review. Next steps include opportunities for joint purchasing of insurance coverage.

Bookstore - A bookstore assessment was conducted which included site visits, financial, contractual and operational reviews. Participating campuses are in the process of reviewing the assessment. Next steps will include the issuance of an RFP and vendor negotiations.

SPEND ANALYSIS

A spend analysis of each of the 24 institution is being conducted by PACE. This will help PACE to identify vendors that are common among the institutions and determine if contracts with these vendors can be renegotiated for better prices and terms.

ENERGY SERVICES

Though a number of institutions have benefited through PACE’s efforts in this area, the exploration of a joint energy purchasing opportunity is underway for the purchase of natural gas and electricity (commodity purchase).

HR TRAINING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAVEL

PACE is currently doing an early stage assessment on both of these topics to determine if a collaborative effort can achieve efficiencies and cost savings.

PACE has developed the following initiatives and will continue to build upon and expand these services for the 24 institutions.

         Banking Services,

         Auditing Services,

         Investment Services,

         Credit Card Merchant Services,

         Telephone Bundling,

         Pouring Rights,

         Emergency Management Services,

         Energy

PACE will continue to explore new initiatives which promise better coordination, efficiencies and savings in the years to come.