

SIS Modernization and Enhancement Project

FAQ

PURPOSE

Why is it important to do this now?

An assessment of the SIS is due, even as we continue to use and improve it. Jenzabar has served us well and we've invested a lot into customization, but it's a good idea to periodically take a hard look at any computer system after ten years or so to make sure it provides the best service to our students and system users.

APPROACH

Are we ditching Jenzabar?

No decisions have been made. Our focus is on modernization and enhancement of the SIS capabilities for our staff and our students. Jenzabar is in the process of enhancing the platform currently used across MCCS and it will also be assessed and considered. We will undertake a process to identify our best practices and needs, but also to identify critical platform capabilities. We want to find the best platform to modernize and enhance our SIS for the colleges and ultimately our students.

We were excited about making some customizations based on what we saw at JAM. Are those on hold now?

As we are reviewing our SIS system, we need to review current planned IT procurements and updates. Given the comprehensive nature of the SIS project and the need to manage our investments wisely, we may invest in small upgrades or changes to Jenzabar that can be completed over the next 3 months and do not cost a significant amount.

Will there be a single platform, or will each college make its own decisions around direction and platform?

No decisions have been made. Our focus is on modernization and enhancement of the SIS capabilities for our staff and our students at all of our colleges.

How will the individual needs and circumstances of the Colleges be considered?

During late July and early August Ande and his team at Deer Brook are visiting each of the colleges in person to meet people face-to-face, learn how the SIS is currently used, gather information and answer

questions about the project. Attendees will include registrars, admissions, student affairs, advising, financial aid, business office workforce development, academics / faculty and student services managers and staff. Because not everyone is available during the summer, there will be ongoing meetings and opportunities to exchange ideas during the school year.

How do I get involved?

Speak with your manager and / or college president to explore how you can actively participate in the process of modernizing and enhancing the SIS. You can also share your ideas, concerns and questions by sending an email to "SISproject@mccs.me.edu"

TIMELINE

When did this project start?

On June 24, 2021 President Daigler sent an email announcement to all college presidents who forwarded it to their staff. A copy of the announcement is posted on the MyMCCS SIS portal.

Does this project have a timeline/benchmarks?

Yes, for the remainder of 2021:

EARLY JULY: From July 8 through July 14 virtual Town Hall sessions were held for each college to make everyone aware of this project and to invite and answer general questions.

LATE JULY / EARLY AUGUST: From July 23 through August 4 on-campus Listening Sessions are taking place to inform the needs of each college for an optimal SIS and commence collaboration.

AUGUST: After the Listening Sessions, the Deer Brook team will be conducting follow up workshops with each college to do a deeper dive into business process mapping and technical requirements.

SEPTEMBER: Gathering and review of general information about prospective suppliers' capabilities and products will commence through an RFI process.

OCTOBER – DECEMBER: If deemed appropriate, an RFP process will officially launch and progress with typical milestones of questions, proposals and scoring as well as an assessment of organizational readiness for change, which will be thoughtfully planned and communicated.

2022 will focus on the implementation of the outcome of the RFP process.

COMMUNICATION

How do I stay up to date with what's going on?

In addition to on-campus information-gathering sessions there was a series of virtual town halls in early July, 2021 to discuss the project and provide updates on progress. If you were not able to attend one of these sessions, you can view the recording for your college posted on the MyMCCS portal.

ABOUT DEER BROOK CONSULTING AND ANDE SMITH

What is Deer Brook?

Deer Brook Consulting is a technology consulting practice founded by Ande Smith that provides services in information security, technology and privacy. Ande served as Chief Information Officer for the state of Maine in 2018-19, and was Chief Technology Officer for the state of Connecticut in 2019-2020.

In addition to his technical expertise, Ande has strong ties to Maine. He served as a member of Maine's State Board of Education, Board of Trustees of Maine Maritime Academy, and as a member of the Maine Charter School Commission.

How long will Ande be in the role?

Ande will be working with us for the next two years. We expect to undertake a search for a permanent CIO in 2023.

Why not just find a new CIO who has comparable experience?

When Marty Gang left to take a position at Lewis-Clark State College in Idaho, we took a step back and looked at our IT operations and concluded that one individual was not going to have all the resources that we needed to help move mobilize and modernize our SIS and improve the delivery of our IT services to learners, faculty and staff. In compliance with purchasing policies, we issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and, through this competitive process, selected Ande Smith and Deer Brook Consulting.

More to come, come back soon!

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