

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PROJECT NO. 06-31

Supply and Install Student Email System

Date: May 16, 2006

To: All Prospective Respondents

From: Houston Community College System, Procurement Operations

Subject: Informational Letter #1 – Request for Proposals (RFP) for Supply and Install Student Email System (Project No. 06-31).

The following questions regarding subject RFP were asked by prospective respondents:

QUESTION 1: What is the number of software licenses required, 50,000 or 125,000?

RESPONSE Q-1: The proposed software licenses must be for 125,000 email accounts with a weekly volume of 8,750,000 inbound and outbound (combined) messages.

QUESTION 2: Is it required to have the capacity of 250,000 accounts immediately?

QUESTION 2a: Is the current Mirapoint Pilot an in-house or outsourced system, and is it installed and working right now?

RESPONSE Q-2: No. However, the system must scale to 250,000 accounts.

RESPONSE Q-2a: The current Mirapoint pilot is an in-house system and it is installed and working.

QUESTION 3: If the vendor proposes an ASP or shared system, who will provide the help desk function?

QUESTIONS 3a: Does HCC have a preference on whom to handle the help desk?

RESPONSE Q-3: If the vendor proposes an ASP or shared system, then the vendor must state the cost of the help desk. If the vendor proposes a shared system that has an

administrative interface to allow HCC to perform all help desk functions and the vendor prefers HCC to provide the help desk, then the vendor should state that in the response. The reason it is necessary for the vendor's proposal to state either the number of HCC staff required to support the administrative and help desk functions (in-house system) or the cost for vendor provided administrative and help desk support (shared system), is to allow HCC to make a direct comparison of the total cost of ownership between the two types of options. That is, the additional HCC staffing costs will be added to the "in-house" vendor's proposed cost and the "outsourced" service costs will be added to the "shared" vendor's proposed cost to make them directly comparable.

RESPONSE Q-3a: No, HCC has no preference.

QUESTION 4: Are there any preferences on hardware?

RESPONSE: The proposed hardware should be whatever hardware works with the proposed software, whether it is an appliance, server architecture, or shared system. HCC's preferred operating systems are Microsoft and SUN Solaris. Preferred database is Oracle.

QUESTION 5: Has the N+1 requirement been removed from the Request for Proposal?

RESPONSE Q-5: Yes, it has been removed and it is no longer a requirement. However, the proposed system must comply with the availability requirements for the system,

QUESTION 6: When is the project's completion date?

RESPONSE Q-6: This proposed system must be completed and in production within sixty (60) days of the execution of the contract. This installation interval must be adhered to. The Contract will include penalties for not meeting this schedule.

QUESTION 7: Are there any specifications for the PeopleSoft interface, can HCC share its schema, and is the committee able to meet individually with the vendor to discuss these details prior to the proposal submittals?

RESPONSE Q-7: It is expected that the vendor has experience with other Higher Ed institutions and has dealt

with external system interfaces for the purposes of auto-provisioning and authentication. Regarding information which is PeopleSoft specific, vendors are encouraged to discuss this with Oracle/PeopleSoft. HCC will not share any schema information with any vendor until the vendor is selected. No, the committee cannot meet with the vendor individually during the proposal development phase.

QUESTION 8: Is Mirapoint an ASP?

RESPONSE Q-8: No, Mirapoint is not an ASP.

QUESTION 9: Can the vendors view Mirapoint's architectural structure?

QUESTION 9a: How much capacity does it have?

QUESTION 9b: What is it sitting on?

QUESTION 9c: How much storage does it have?

RESPONSE Q-9: No, HCC will not provide Mirapoint's architectural structure. Vendor may visit Mirapoint's website.

RESPONSE 9a-c: The current structure has 37,000 accounts with 10MB each.

QUESTION 10: Does the current system use IMAP or POP3? Is all of the data to be migrated on the Mirapoint servers?

RESPONSE Q-10: Neither. The system is set up for a Web interface only. As such, all emails and account information to be migrated from the Mirapoint system to the new production system are on the Mirapoint system and not in student email clients.

QUESTION 11: Is Mirapoint's data structure in an IMAP layout?

RESPONSE Q-11: It is expected that the vendor will use past experience with migrating data (emails and attachments) and account information from another vendor's system to the proposed system to develop this cost. Although the Mirapoint system is currently using web interface only, the system is capable of supporting IMAP.

QUESTION 12: Will there be any penalties if the vendor's response states that the vendor cannot complete the project within 60 days?

QUESTION 12a: Does the project funding end at the end of the fiscal year?

RESPONSE 12: See Response 6 above. The contract will include penalties for failure to comply with the sixty day installation schedule. The vendor's proposal must include a proposed project timeline that states how long the project will take to complete from the time of contract signing.

RESPONSE 12a: Project funds will not be gone after August 31st, it will roll to the next Fiscal Year's Budget. It is expected that the action item to approve the project will be presented to the HCC Board in June and for the contract to be signed by the end of June.

QUESTION 13: Is there an allocated budget and can it be disclosed?

RESPONSE 13: Yes there is an allocated budget; however it will not be disclosed.

QUESTION: 14: If the vendor is proposing an outside advertisement to help reduce cost, will that be in non compliance?

RESPONSE 14: If the vendor proposes to place non-HCC advertisements on student email web pages or within student emails, the vendor will be in non-compliance with that requirement. However, this will not disqualify the vendor's proposal.

QUESTION 15: Is there any data in the current 37,000 accounts that needs to be put back to PeopleSoft?

RESPONSE Q-15: It is not necessary, current data has already been moved to PeopleSoft.

QUESTION 16: Should the test system be a scaled-down version of the production system or a duplication of the production system?

RESPONSE Q-16: The test system is to be a scaled-down version of the production system. It is intended that this system will be used to test patches and updates prior to

installing these on the productions system. The test system will also be used to test interfaces to external systems such as a CRM system or a portal system.

QUESTION 17: For vendor's proposing shared system solutions, does HCC require daily offsite tape backups?

RESPONSE Q-17: Paragraph 4.8.2 states HCC requirements for this function. If the vendor's solution is a variance from this requirement, it should be so stated in the vendor's proposal.

QUESTION 18: What type of backup service does HCC currently use SAN or network backups?

RESPONSE Q-18: HCC is currently using network backups.

QUESTION 19: Does HCC have a tape backup system and does the vendor need to include that in response?

RESPONSE Q-19: HCC has a tape backup system. The vendor does not need to provide that in their response.

QUESTION 20: Should the proposal include Veritas licenses for the network backup?

RESPONSE Q-20: Yes.

QUESTION 21: What is the required capacity for the server hardware, 125,000 or 250,000 accounts?

RESPONSE Q-21: The server hardware must support 125,000 accounts with a combined weekly volume of 8,750,000 inbound and outbound messages (with quotes to support each of the five quota scenarios), but must be capable of scaling to 250,000 accounts with a combined weekly volume of 17,500,000 inbound and outbound messages.

QUESTION 22: Is LDAP used for the directory synchronization?

RESPONSE Q-22: Yes, LDAP is for directory synchronization. It is up to the vendor to decide whether they will be using LDAP.

QUESTION 23: How much capacity is required for the Test System?

RESPONSE Q-23: It is up to the vendor. The test system will be used for such things as testing patches and updates prior to installing these on the production system. The test system will also be used to test interfaces to external systems such as a CRM system or a portal system.

QUESTION 24: Are there any SLA requirements for monitoring the e-mail system?

RESPONSE Q-24: If it's an internal system then HCC will monitor the system. If it is an outsourced system, then the vendor needs to specify in response whether HCC will monitor the system or the vendor will monitor the system. (HCC currently using Microsoft Windows and SUN Solaris Native Tools).

QUESTION 25: Can the word "solution" be used instead of hardware in the response for the spell-checking feature built into the proposed hardware?

RESPONSE Q-25: Yes. The spell-checking feature must be built into the proposed solution.

QUESTION 26: Can you explain what you mean by "[d]escribe how the system is being utilized by other institutions for marketing purposes".

RESPONSE Q-26: Marketing would include such things as notifying students of new classes that might be of interest based on other classes the student has taken.

QUESTION 27: Can you describe what kind of Enterprise portals?

RESPONSE Q-27: An example would be Vignette. HCC is wanting to get an idea of the Vendor's experience with other Higher Education Institutions, how can it add value to HCC.

QUESTION 28: Is there a plan to install an Enterprise portal for the next fiscal year.

RESPONSE Q-28: It is expected that HCC will begin to develop the requirements for an Enterprise portal in the next fiscal year.

QUESTION 29: Does the May 14th deadline date for submitting vendor question fall on Sunday?

RESPONSE Q-29: Yes, the deadline is on Sunday, May 14th at 4:00PM.

QUESTION 30: Page 30 is blank, is there any information left out?

RESPONSE Q-30: No information is left out on page 30; it is a page break.

QUESTION 31: Section 2.1.3 states that at least ten references for “higher education” “must” be provided, but then goes on to state that at least three references for “higher education or business” that are comparable in size “must” be provided as well. As long as they demonstrate skill and ability to perform this contract, may comparable references be provided from education, institutions, and businesses?

RESPONSE Q-31: Section 2.1.3 states the vendor must provide a list of ten higher education institutions where the proposed system is being used as a student email system. These installations can be performed and/or supported by any vendor, not necessarily by your company. This information should be available to you from the system manufacturer. The purpose, as stated, is to assess the viability of using the system for the stated purpose – student email. If you cannot provide a list of ten, you should provide what you can. This will not eliminate any company from consideration.

QUESTION 32: In reference to Section 4.1.11, in cases where joint planning and system definition is required, will the access to domain experts and technical information around the current system be provided prior to the contract finalization and beginning of the 60-day implementation period?

RESPONSE Q-32: Access to HCC technical experts and information will be provided to the successful vendor during statement of work definition and finalization of the contract. The sixty day period begins when the contract is signed.

QUESTION 33: In reference to Section 4.2.1, could additional information be provided about the interfaces into the PeopleSoft Student Administration System / ERP database?

RESPONSE Q-33: See response to Question 7.

QUESTION 34: In reference to Section 4.2.1, what modifications to the system were made by either PeopleSoft or HCC to customize the solution for HCC?

RESPONSE Q-34: No modifications have been made to any system that would affect the vendor's ability to satisfy this requirement. Vendors are encouraged to contact Oracle/PeopleSoft to address alternatives for this requirement.

QUESTION 35: In reference to Section 4.2.1, will HCC allow / participate in the modification of the PeopleSoft system and/or Oracle database if required for integration?

RESPONSE Q-35: HCC will have an active participation in any modifications that are required to satisfy this requirement.

QUESTION 36: In reference to Section 4.2.2, does the PeopleSoft / ERP system currently perform any type of encryption?

RESPONSE Q-36: Yes.

QUESTION 37: In reference to Section 4.2.4, is it HCC's intent then to allow students to use the email clients (including web client) ability to access other personal email accounts from other providers other than HCC? Why is support of multiple protocols required?

RESPONSE Q-37: HCC has no intent regarding the student's use of email clients. Students must be free to use their own email clients for whatever purpose and with whatever provider as they see fit. The support of multiple,

secure protocols (e.g., POP3s) is required in the event that HCC begins sending private information within email.

QUESTION 38: In reference to Section 4.3.1, what notification components are currently available in the PeopleSoft / ERP system?

RESPONSE Q-38: This section does not address notification. This section deals with auto-provisioning, which is expected to occur in real time when the student registers on-line.

QUESTION 39: In reference to Section 4.3.4, it is mentioned that the proposed system must work with the current PeopleSoft environment to perform auto-suspend and auto-delete. Could you describe the actions that will be taken in/by the PeopleSoft environment in relation to this requirement?

RESPONSE Q-39: It is expected that the some of the business rules that will affect auto-suspension and auto-deletion will be contained in PeopleSoft. An example might be a lapse of time in which the student has not taken any classes. This information could be available to the Student Email System through an interface so the appropriate action could be taken to suspend or delete the account.

QUESTION 40: In reference to Section 4.10.1, what is the structure and method of access to Mirapoint data as it resides in the system today? Will Mirapoint be involved in this migration effort?

RESPONSE Q-40: See response to Question 11.

QUESTION 41: In reference to Section 5.1.1, what methods of notifications are desired? Does the PeopleSoft / ERP system provide for alternate email addresses? May we modify the PeopleSoft system and the associated enrollment workflow to produce or include a hardcopy email access notice? Would notifications be post office mailed? Student will not receive notice of creation of email account on the new account itself since they will not yet have access.

RESPONSE Q-41: It is desired that student notification be automated. The PeopleSoft Student Administration System

does provide for alternate (non-HCC) email addresses, but it is up to the discretion of the student whether this information is provided by the student. Any proposed and acceptable modifications to the PeopleSoft system will be performed jointly by the successful vendor and HCC technical programming staff. It is not expected or desirable that notifications be post office mailed.