

District Office of Information Technology

333 East 8th Street, Oakland, CA 94606

(510) 587-7800: www.peralta.edu/

September 26, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jowel C. Laguerre, Ph.D., Chancellor

Cc: The Chancellor's Cabinet

FROM: The District IT Classified Staff

Abigail Brewer

Alexander Hernandez

Chi Au

Chioma Ndubuisi

Frank Chez

Hayat Guessoum

Johnathan Olkowski

Kit Hui

Kyu Lee

Pratiksha Thakor

Roderick Fajarda

Sandi D. Daniel

Teresa Chan

Wessenyelesh Tsehai

SUBJECT: Response to Chancellor's Request for IT Staff's Input for a Request for Proposal (RFP) to Secure the Services of IT Management Consultancy Group

As district IT staff, and in response to your direction, we took the opportunity to consider your decision to develop an RFP, and provided you with the "IT Needs Recommendations" on September 19, 2016. In preparation for the 10-minute presentation that you asked us to provide to the Chancellor's Cabinet on Monday, September 26, 2016, we have summarized those recommendations as follows:

1. What should be in an RFP? Development of the RFP should only be used to address projects or tasks where no such in-house skills exist or when a project's workload exceeds internal capacity. Examples of this are: PeopleSoft Security Project, PeopleSoft Modernization and Smart Classroom, Voice Over IP and Cloud Mail migration Projects. In these instances, all goals, outcomes, costs and timelines should be clarified in the Scope of Work.

In general, this model is effective because the outside party's compensation is tied directly to project outcomes. Also, there are built-in incentives to complete projects on-time and to the agreed upon terms. For example, payment can be withheld if scope of work is not completed as agreed.

2. Should IT Consultants Manage District IT? IT consultants should not manage District IT, and they should be used for the purposes highlighted in response 1. Otherwise, to do so, creates conflicts and inefficiencies such as ambiguous accountability, no objective oversight for their work, and they cannot legally evaluate the work of the IT employees. Further, by avoiding conflicts of interests, improper actions can also be avoided that could otherwise compromise the work and integrity of the IT operations.

A key issue in recommending that leadership and management of district IT not be outsourced is ensuring that the open-ended nature of such a role leads to effective, accountable, efficient, honest outcomes. Otherwise, with a consultant as the lead, an inherent danger exists when expected results are not well-defined nor closely supervised for adherence to timelines and cost constraints. Even where

tasks are well-defined, there is a strong financial incentive to the outside party to prolong the duration of occupancy as opposed to accomplishing tasks. Completing assigned tasks and objectives in a timely manner, below budget or beyond expectations is dis-incentivized as the result is that it puts the third party out of a job.

“The interfaces that bind many functions together (human or software) must be strong to enable management outsourcing. Unfortunately, in the Peralta Community College District (PCCD) environment, those interfaces are fragile if they exist at all. Fixing these flaws internally is difficult. Handling such handoffs with third parties is more complex. If we can't do it internally, we will never do it well with third parties.” Outsourcing IT management. Is the time right? By Glenn O'Donnell, senior analyst at Forrester Research, Forrester Research

3. What should leadership/management of District IT look like? District IT requires an effective administrator who is both a leader demonstrating a clear vision in guiding, coaching and otherwise supervising the staff, and a manager able to carry out the operational due diligence to ensure that we achieve the district's IT objectives and goals. Leadership and management are holistic. Both require oversight and adaption to an always-shifting environment that includes economic, political and technological changes. It requires forging relationships inside and outside of the department that are aligned with the Educational goals of Peralta (as opposed to short-term personal or 3rd party financial interests). It requires establishing and maintaining a positive work culture that staff can come to rely on.

What type of IT leadership should we hire

With the rapid acceleration of information technology, Higher Education IT enterprise has become complex. IT is simultaneously more challenging, relevant, and exciting than ever. Leading IT requires a unique set of characteristics and capabilities. We have identified some of those below:

- We need a Chief Information Officer (CIO) who is also the Chief Technical Officer (CTO). A strong technologist with a good knowledge balance of communication, information services and enterprise applications. The CIO/CTO should have the business knowledge necessary to align technology-related decisions with the organization's goals.
- The CIO needs to be a visionary leader, not one who simply reacts to conditions or directives. The visionary CIO is the thought lead for District IT, a visionary who lays out an executable strategic plan for information technology at Peralta
- We expect the new CIO to be a leader from day one
- This new leader needs true enterprise IT management experience. Experience needs to be defined and evaluated
- We need to consider candidates who have worked outside Higher Education
- The CIO should unify the management of the four schools with the Chancellor's mandate and support
- A CIO is a strategist. Someone in this role must understand the organization, provide information system and technology leadership that brings to life transformation across the organization.
- As an Ambassador, the CIO is aware of the political sensitivities and maintains a broad and even-handed view. They are a trusted advisor, building and maintaining relationships with senior management and colleagues from across the organization.

Recommendations for Director Level Management

- Director level managers need to be technical experts, and equipped with strong interpersonal and people management skills
- Director needs a healthy balance of Enterprise Network and Applications experience
- Each director should know the roles of her/his employees, especially a manager with

technical responsibility

- Each director needs to be hands-on with a track record of experience
- Each director needs to have the **vital** industry certificates. For example, CISCO, Microsoft, Oracle and Project Management Professional Certificate

Other Recommendations from IT Staff

What was found in the most recent assessment was not new information and in many cases a plan of action was already in place. For example:

- We recognized the [District Network Upgrade](#),
- Life safety issues and outdated telecommunication infrastructure led to VOIP Project.
- We initiated the Campus Wireless Project to support student success.

With each new change in leadership, all work is put on hold or abandoned, projects that were already in progress are restarted. For example we were already in talks to purchase new backup system, Active Directory upgrade, Cloud Email, PeopleSoft Finance Upgrade and Asset Management Projects. As a district, we keep taking different approaches that do not get us to the desired result.

1. Address underlining issues, including lack of business processes, policies and awareness at an institutional level, IT infrastructure needs and resource gaps. There has been a long history at Peralta of blaming the IT Department for what are, in reality, Institutional shortcomings. These shortcomings include (among others) a lack of end-user training, lack of clearly defined business process ownership, lack of end-user and department accountability (and associated polices), and favoritism. There is an unreasonable expectation at Peralta that Technology can solve all these problems. These shortcomings are often exposed through the implementation of new technology initiatives but they are not issues which technology can solve.

There has also been a long history of introducing new technology to Peralta without consideration as to whether or not Peralta can absorb it, both at the end-user and IT staffing levels. PCCD needs to integrate IT as part of its core business competence. The IT department has little or no authority to place restrictions or requirements on new technology, resulting in a variety of difficult or impossible to manage solutions that are introduced into the environment, in some cases, even without District IT's knowledge.

Consider this subset of changes to the IT Infrastructure that have occurred within the last five years:

- The District-wide Security Camera project roughly doubled the size of Peralta's network infrastructure.
- The Smart Classroom Project added approximately 150 technology-enabled classrooms.
- Each building renovation that has been completed under Measure A has generally resulted in a four-fold increase in the technology infrastructure.

Despite these large-scale changes there has been no discussion of whether IT's role has increased in scope, and additional staffing, funding or expertise are warranted.

These issues cannot be corrected until the current role of IT is properly re-evaluated within Peralta, and the financial and human resource short-falls are addressed. Examples of criteria

which might be used include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluation of the IT Departments at other nearby Community Colleges that use PeopleSoft with respect to their policies/procedures, staffing model, industry salary standards, budget, organization and relationship with other Departments in their respective organizations.
- Aligning Peralta's General Fund expenditures for IT with the state median.
- Creation of a Service Catalog through which staffing and financial recommendations can be made.

The IT department must be empowered to drive "Technology" here at Peralta by providing information systems and technology leadership.

2. Meet the Needs of the IT Staff. Peralta IT employees are your biggest asset since they get the required work done so that our organization can meet our business objectives.

- a. **On-going Training and Professional Development.** Effective training can provide us with essential next-generation skills while bringing with it a host of business benefits. With regular training we can easily identify any gaps in the market and skill gaps within the existing workforce. By identifying these gaps early, there is time to train staff in these required areas so they can fulfil our roles effectively. Although one-off training may be provided, it's important that training plans are put in place to help develop skills throughout our tenure. To retain knowledge, skills need to be practiced and refreshed on a regular basis so elements aren't forgotten.
- b. **New Equipment and Technology.** We are in need of new tools and software to perform our work. For example we don't have software to monitor our databases and networks. With the changing landscape of Education technology Peralta has already been left behind. PCCD needs to integrate IT as part of its core business and make the necessary investments needed to be competitive. *"Standing still can kill your business, so by making sure your staff are constantly advancing, you will continue to move forward and remain competitive within the marketplace" add source" The Top 10 Benefits Of Ongoing Staff Training And Development By Angus Gill*
- c. **Re-evaluate the IT Organization.** With the changing landscape in education technology, we need to reevaluate the IT Organization Chart and compare it to best practices, and to other innovative districts with colleges our size. (Refer to 2015 Program Review document.)
- d. **Staffing.** There are vital IT positions that do not exist in Peralta IT.
 - 1) Address staffing shortages, including filling vacant positions and identify critical positions that do not currently exist. For example: Desktop Specialist, Technical Trainer, PeopleSoft Security Administrator, Business System Analyst and Quality Assurance Analyst.
 - 2) Define career paths for Information Technology staff and use professional development to prepare future leaders. Establish a development plan for all employees. Provide resources for staff to attend conferences, workshops and

membership in industry associations.

- 3) Recruit leadership that has working knowledge of the most essential IT areas, especially Applications, Systems, and Networks. Their skills should include coaching, problem solving and team building.

- e. **Enterprise Policy.** District IT, with input from Campus IT, should set the general standards throughout the District. Purchasing of IT Software, Hardware and Cloud Services should be done in partnership with IT.
- f. **Ongoing Staff feedback between the Chancellor and IT.** The Chancellor needs a way to reach out to IT staff and get their feedback.