

Recommendation:

The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Assessment Steering Committee (Committee) recommends moving forward with a new ERP solution recognizing that the current solutions are not meeting the VSC's system and institutional needs). The ERP Assessment reports from our partner Ferrilli highlighted many of the specific challenges our functional areas across the VSC face with manual entry, workflow, and customizations because Colleague was not designed for multi-institution systems. Given an upcoming requirement to move from on-premise Colleague to the cloud, doing nothing is not an option at this time. The Committee recommends the following action steps to move forward with an ERP replacement:

- Complete an Architecture Assessment of all impacted functional areas in Human Resources, Finance, and Student Information Systems (Registrar, Financial Aid, Student Billing)
 - The Committee recommends that the assessment include gathering requirements from subject matter experts at both institutions individually, followed by a crossover discussion to identify requirements that are both common to both institutions and unique to each institution.
 - The Committee recommends conducting user stories to ensure an understanding of student and employee user experiences and fully capture the requirements of student and employee users of the ERP system.
- Create a preliminary Resource Plan for ERP implementation with associated costs and recommendations for staffing, consulting, and other needs in recognition of the significant impact on working time for identified subject matter experts.
- Define a Governance Structure to determine decision-making authority for ERP requirements, implementation, and operations.
- Develop a Project Timeline to support implementation, prioritizing the Human Resources and Financial modules first, followed by the Student Information System. This timeline should span from pre-procurement through user acceptance testing (UAT).

After completing the above four tasks, the Committee recommends budget modeling to confirm that the Board-allocated funding is sufficient for the scope of the planned RFP. Upon completion of these tasks and the budget modeling, the Committee then recommends issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to replace the existing infrastructure.

Assumptions:

- The current ERP solution is not meeting either system or institution needs within the VSC, including workflow management, the necessity for significant overrides, customizations, and numerous manual entry requirements.
- Colleague does not meet VSC business needs because it was not designed to accommodate multiple institutions.

- The Vermont State Colleges will seek to identify a product that allows for one instance of an ERP solution in order to maximize economies of scale and in recognition of the interdependencies within the system.
- The existing software infrastructure is not sustainable in a future state as identified in the consultant reports and given the industry's migration to SaaS. Remaining on the current platform would still require migration to Colleague SaaS, including increased expense and a major implementation on par with implementing a new solution.
- A core value for choosing and implementing the new solution will be its ability to offer a streamlined and integrated user experience for students, employees, and functional area end users. Vendors who keep pace with change and leverage opportunities in the changing higher education landscape will be prioritized.
- Any new system should enable a culture of continuous improvement.
- We will be intentional about correcting inaccurate information stored in our existing systems before attempting to implement any new product.

Guardrails:

- If a single, shared instance of an ERP is selected, a new ERP solution must provide functionality to support the distinctive functional needs of multiple institutions, specifically a community college with certificate, two-year programs, secondary education programs, and work-based learning programs, and a university with certificate programs, two-year, four-year, and graduate degrees with a complex array of learning modalities
- A new ERP must support seamless integration across functional areas, including HR, finance, and the Student Information System.
- A new ERP must support seamless integration between other VSC systems, including external vendors, that support business needs.
- Resourcing planning and budgeting needs to be addressed during preplanning phase before moving forward.

Risks:

- Resource capacity of existing staff with subject matter expertise required to implement a new ERP solution.
- Change fatigue in recognition of the significant pace of transformation on all of the impacted areas.
- Subject Matter Expertise limitations with broad-based IT systems change within the respective institutions.
- Many of our data points are the products of the exact kinds of customizations and workarounds that we need to resolve in a new ERP. Without a clearer understanding of our data we risk replicating these issues in a new ERP.
- IT Programming and Data expertise and capacity limitations within the system to facilitate change.
- Readiness for this change is at varying levels within departments and across institutions.

- Ellucian will no longer support the on-premise version of Colleague in the future, so we do not have the option to wait much longer before beginning some sort of ERP transition. No date has been announced by Ellucian, but they have made it known that the only option for the future will be cloud.