



## Administrative Systems Management Constituent Group Meeting Minutes

**Sessions:** Wednesday, October 2, 12:40 – 2:10 p.m.  
Thursday, October 3, 4:55 – 6:10 p.m. (20 participants)

**Facilitators:** **Eric Bird**, SIS Project Manager,  
Kennedy School of Government,  
Harvard University  
**Kevin Shalla**, Manager,  
Computing & Networking Services,  
Illinois Institute of Technology

### Session One: Selection Issues

Requests for Proposal (RFP) - have others used them, and to advantage? One school (based upon recommendation at last year's constituent group) used a consultant in to help with the RFP process and is very satisfied with the results. The RFP helps to weed out software incapable of features required; do site visits to customers to aid final selection. Advantiv can help with the selection process; it has a tool with thousands of questions to help institution discover what its needs are. KPMG also has a decision tool. Some schools didn't use an RFP, but simply chose the same vendor of other products already purchased, to aid in integration. How do you build consensus on the RFP? - there should be upper level support or a full-time person devoted to process. Some set up certain detailed example circumstances which the vendor can address in detail.

Should the institution change its processes to allow use of various software packages, or select software to continue the current process? Most think that some of each is typical - politics sometimes drives decisions.

Regarding the project management on the new system implementation, are there skills in-house? Should you use the vendor? One school created a new project management group to handle upgrades and new system implementation.

Are consultants cost efficient? They can be helpful, providing expertise in processes, institutional environment, decision processes in higher education, and a view of other schools. Get references on good AND bad projects - this can give credibility. Interview which person will be assigned to the project - don't hire a consulting company, hire a consultant.

The article "Campus Financial Systems for the Future" on the EDUCAUSE web site Information Resources Library contains valuable material to aid in selection of systems.

In staffing for the project, how do you free up resources? To back fill effectively, the team leaders need to train others to handle the regular duties, and use space outside the regular office - to get enough undisturbed time to work on the project.

How do you handle the customize/don't customize question? Some schools have successfully not customized, saving large resources by making upgrades relatively painless.

## Session Two

The following topics were discussed...

1. Why is the ASM list not active?
  - already have product-specific lists, this should serve a different need
  - potential discussion topics:
    - modify/don't modify and change control methodologies
    - reporting
    - 24x7 operations without a 24x7 staff
2. Is there a collective knowledgebase for past experiences?
  - ASM group did a survey last year
  - Campus Computing Survey
  - most info is anecdotal
3. Reporting issues
  - To data warehouse or not to data warehouse: for successful data warehousing, need high quality data scrubbing, minimize time delay
    - management-types like data warehouses, operations people don't.
  - Tools: Crystal Reports, Access, Cognos, Brio, Business Objects
4. Change management tool?
  - eWorks, Star Team
5. Does anyone have successful user testing?
  - YES, with strong clear test plan (don't just say "please test"--tell them how/what)
6. Has anyone gone from 3-shift operation to 2-shift?
  - mixed reactions:
    - "Implementing Banner made us go back to 24 hrs"
    - changed to 8am - 9pm
    - 24x5 for data center
  - Use overnight crew to cross-train -- make them more helpdesk-like
7. Any conversion of mainframe programmers to relational database programmers?
  - some retired
  - some retrained
  - need to find the right job.
  - key issue: new OS is much harder (Unix more complex than VMS)

8. Contract issues

- license typically ongoing
- per year average maintenance increases?
- can be very expensive
- Tip: Buy Oracle directly from Oracle rather than through the app vendor, if you can. Much better support options.
- Tip: Enterprise Edition can be competitive price-wise
- use Gartner for negotiation assistance -- how much to expect to pay.

9. Support staff size/# of DBAs required

**Submitted by:** Kevin Shalla ([Kevin.Shalla@iit.edu](mailto:Kevin.Shalla@iit.edu))  
Manager, Student Information Systems,  
Illinois Institute of Technology