Memo

To: M. Webber, Asst. Registrar - Student Systems
         M. Browning, AVC Admissions & Enrollment Services

From: Becky Scott, Electronic Student Services

RE: Staffing needs for Portal testing

With the transition of our student site, StudentPortal*, into the new web portal, TPortal*, there will be a significant amount of testing needed for student tools. At our current staffing levels, it will be difficult to meet the aggressive project deadlines for testing and implementation. We estimate it will take a minimum of six and a half months - at current staffing levels - to complete thorough testing of the forty StudentPortal programs currently in use.

When a program is moved from StudentPortal to TPortal, it will need to be tested for behavior and appearance. If there is reprogramming required during the transition, there will be additional testing of functionality, accuracy and behavior (does it follow the proper sequence, show the correct information in the right place). We test the programs from both Windows (Explorer, Netscape and Mozilla/ Firefox) and Apple (Safari, Explorer and Netscape) platforms. We must test multiple situations - the beginning, middle and end of a quarter - with a variety of student types. This testing will be time consuming; it could take three to five days per program, depending on the complexity of the program's tasks and the availability of the testing server. We must have time to properly set up the scenarios in the testing environment, including setting the background controls and running reports to gather the proper student profiles.

The TPortal project currently mandates a functional site by February 2005. At this time, though, the programs are not yet ready for our testing. Because of this, our deliverable date is already in jeopardy. In addition to this testing, we must keep up with normal e-mail, program controls, changes, troubleshooting and maintenance of the current StudentPortal site. The combination of these two items could delay our launch until April 2005 or later.

With the added workload of extensive testing, response time to customers will suffer. E-mail response times, currently within 1 - 2 hours of receipt, would drop to 8 hours or more. Testing on current problems will take longer. Normal program updates and testing - critical to keep the site updated and well-functioning - would take longer than they now do. Customer satisfaction - our ultimate priority - would likely suffer.

I've investigated some solutions that could alleviate our staffing concerns and facilitate a timely project completion.

Our first option would be to hire another full-time career employee. Workload is currently enough to utilize a third person, especially as the project nears Phase 1 completion. We already know that our workload will permanently increase due to this project: liaison/ outreach work, training, new features, testing, and maintenance will certainly be needed in the future. With two empty cubes in our new building, space is not a major issue. However, we would have to find funding for an administrative analyst. While adding a third FTE is certainly

a long-term goal, it may not suit our short-term goals. Budget cuts and the lengthy hiring process could still detrimentally affect this option.

A second option would be to hire a temporary employee to help with the testing on a short-term basis. At 50% time, this person could help shorten the testing timeline by two months or more. While a temporary employee would be quick to obtain, the cost is still high at the analyst level ($25.49/ hr). A temp to meet our needs may be hard to find, as familiarity with our systems is essential. We can't afford lengthy training at this point in time.

Our final - and most attractive - option is to hire an intern through the Career Connection office. We would share the cost of a 50% employee with Career Connection. We all benefit: our department gains help from someone already familiar with the University system and procedures, as well as training money; the employee gains marketable skills and the potential for career advancement; the other department receives funds for a temporary replacement; and the University benefits with higher employee satisfaction and retention. With the cost sharing benefits of the internship program, this option is most cost effective of the three, as well as a speedy solution to our problem.

Attached is a salary comparison of the three options provided.

I recommend that we start the intern hiring process as soon as possible. By the time we complete training and help the intern become familiar with our testing requirements, we should have some programs ready for testing in the TPortal environment.

Salary Comparison

<u>FTE - Admin Analyst</u>

100% time

$36,500 + 22% (benefits)

Total cost: **$44,530.00**

<u>Temp - Admin Analyst</u>

50% time

$25.49/ hour for approximately 4 months

Total cost: **$8836.53**

<u>Intern - Admin Analyst</u>

50% time

30% of 50% for approximately 4 months

(including benefits)

Total cost: **$2226.50**

Becky Scott
portal testing/ staff needs memo

Definition of terms:

StudentPortal - the current student registration and transactional site - it includes both content and programs.

TPortal - future student portal that will contain all StudentPortal functionality in addition to new programs and content; the services will move from focus on the registrar, financial aid, and payment to a broader, campus-wide service site.

Electronic Student Services - We are the Quality Assurance people for StudentPortal. We work with programmers to maintain the site, update content and test new or broken programs. We are the customer service representatives for StudentPortal, answering calls and e-mails from students and staff in regard to functionality, finding information, help, etc. We report to the Assistant Registrar, Student Systems under the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Admissions and Enrollment Services, but work with many campus entities to provide services to students and staff. We currently have two staff members working on the site, doing the testing and customer service.

Names have been changed.