

# THE SCOOP

Office of the Chancellor ITS Department News

November 2008



**Minnesota**  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

## MnSCU to Co-Host D2L Conference



Mark your calendars now for July 12-17, 2009.

St. Paul's RiverCentre will be the site of the 2009 International D2L Users Conference. MnSCU will co-host the event with Desire2Learn.

The event kicks off on Sunday evening, July 12. The main conference will be July 13-15, with post-conference sessions July 16-17.

This is the second time in three years that the conference will be held in Minnesota. In 2007, the conference was held in Duluth, co-hosted by Lake Superior

College and the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

The conference will include a variety of tracks geared towards teaching and learning, training and support, technical administration, and program management.

This is a great opportunity for MnSCU faculty, administrators, and technical staff to attend an international conference within driving distance.

~Karen Wenz, IMS System Administrator

The 2008 conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee, where an all-day Executive Session was offered for the first time. Given the success of that session, it will be

offered again at the 2009 conference in St. Paul. The Executive Session will be geared toward an audience of high level planners and administrators, including CAOs, CIOs, Presidents, and others involved in planning and administering enterprise system technology and learning management systems.

We look forward to co-hosting this event in St. Paul, and we anticipate high numbers of participants from all MnSCU institutions.

Stay tuned for more information about the conference in the coming months.

## New Budget Module

On November 10th, campus Accounting staff were given the ability to access the Personnel Expense portion of the new web-based Budget Module application.

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Some key features of this new application include:

- The creation of a *base staff* - a fixed set of employees where salary & fringe are calculated for the year in which you are budgeting.
- The ability to apply "what-if" scenarios to the base staff. e.g. What if MAPE was given a 3% increase. What if health insurance increased by 10%.
- Ability to download the base staff and/or scenarios to an Excel spreadsheet.
- Projections of salary and fringe bene-

fits out to any number of fiscal years.

- Ability to give step increases.
- Ability to modify the FTE of a position without affecting HR data and to see what the financial impact would be if a FTE changed for a position.
- Ability to add proposed positions.



We have received very positive feedback from the pilots. And while it isn't required that campuses use this application, we do highly encourage everyone to begin using it.

## Intro to the PMO

Times, they are a-changin’ — especially in ITS. As we evolve and change to better meet the needs of our campuses, we continue to achieve milestones that help define the MnSCU system as a leader in higher education and state government. One such milestone is the launch of our groundbreaking IT Portfolio Management Office (PMO).

Established in June 2007 to track the return on investment of major, state-funded ITS initiatives, the PMO oversees the management and execution of the MnSCU ITS project portfolio.

The driving force behind the PMO is a newly established Enterprise Investment Commit-

tee (EIC) governance process (article below) that helps prioritize projects, allocate resources, and ensure timely delivery of results.

The PMO was created to:

- Provide enterprise-wide project coordination and consistency.
- Set standards and methodologies for all projects
- Select projects that support strategic goals
- Help the executive team track the progress of projects by developing metrics against which all projects may be measured

- Identify available resources for upcoming initiatives
- Support the project managers and project teams by providing training, mentoring and career development
- Collect and archive documents from completed projects and analyze them for trends
- Promote enterprise-wide transparency by maintaining an easily accessible knowledge-management system that gathers and stores all project-related information

See the [PMO website](#) for more information.

## The EIC Process-How an Idea becomes a Project

### How does a project start?

A business need is identified by an individual or group and taken to a user group or advisory committee for support. The group or committee representing the idea then creates an initiative summary, which is presented to the Cross Functional Advisory Group for review; this is the first step in the Enterprise Investment Committee (EIC) governance process. Once the idea is in the pipeline, it moves forward through the EIC process via the Project Management Office (PMO). The EIC will be taking new proposals in August 09’. Watch for a future edition of *The Scoop* for details on how to get your project before the EIC.

system’s strategic goals?

- How will it affect campuses — specifically students, faculty, and learning?
- How will the project propel MnSCU into the future? Does it address capacity,

build-out, prior commitment, or cross-agency partnerships?

- What is the financial business benefit, in terms of avoiding future costs?

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### Who is on the EIC?

The EIC is comprised of five university presidents, along with the sr. vice chancellor and vice chancellors who represent the Academic and Student Affairs, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, and ITS channels. This group makes the final decision to approve or reject projects

### What are some of the factors that determine which projects are approved?

Before a project is approved, the following questions are considered:

- In what way will the project impact the

## The Enterprise Investment Management Process



Channels



Enterprise Investment Prioritization



Management of the Portfolio

- 1) Each channels Sr. Vice Chancellor/Vice Chancellor (Finance & Administration, ASA, HR, ITS) is responsible for their own planning process and initiative identification
- 2) Advisory and User Groups provide recommendations to the channels
- 3) Each channel presents its strategic business initiatives to the Enterprise Investment Committee
- 4) The Enterprise Investment Committee consists of the Four Sr. VC/VCs along with 5 College/University Presidents and meets quarterly
- 5) The Enterprise Investment Committee scores and prioritizes the current and proposed system-wide initiatives
- 6) Priorities will be reviewed by the Leadership Council Committees, endorsed by the full Leadership Council and approved by the Chancellor
- 7) The Portfolio Management Office administers reporting on all project performance and provides milestone progress
- 8) The PMO also provides assistance with business case development when requested

## Spotlight on... Dave Willford

The "go to" guy; that's how Dave Willford's supervisor, Glen Guida, describes him.

According to Glen, "Dave has a tremendous amount of respect from his colleagues within the OOC ITS division. He is viewed as the "go to" person on a wide variety of very complex issues, problems, and challenges."

Dave Willford is an ITS Systems Analyst, located in beautiful Bemidji.

His main focus for a while now has been the RDB to Oracle Conversion.

Glen says, "Dave accepted the role of Technical Project Manager for one of the largest and most complex projects MnSCU IT has ever undertaken - the migration from one database and platform to another. This projects involves the interaction and support from nearly every IT staff member in MnSCU. It also involves nearly every technical component of our enterprise architecture. In spite of the



Dave on Lake Bemidji

fact that there have been many challenges with this project, Dave has never veered off course or become frustrated with unforeseen or unexpected setbacks. MnSCU is very lucky to have Dave in this organization - and leading projects like this one."

Dave says, " I have many good ITS staff people working with/helping me on this

project. This is a big project for ITS in the ISRS area and will allow us to do great things in the higher education IT arena when complete. Pound for pound I believe MnSCU has the best "Integrated" higher education student record system available".

It's not all work and no play for Dave though. He loves spending time with his family

and friends fishing & hunting in Northern Minnesota and Canada. He also enjoy golfing, but says it is hard to specialize in both golf and fishing, so right now he leans toward fishing.

Dave's father was a Mn State Park Manager



Dave holding Hannah's 49.5" Muskie

and Dave actually grew up living in three State Parks. Swimming at the park beaches in the summer he got good enough to get his first job as a life guard in a State Park.

When he's not outside, Dave likes to relax by watching old John Wayne and Clint Eastwood westerns and munching on home-made stove top popcorn.

He is married to his high school sweetheart, Jennifer, and they recently celebrated their 14th wedding anniversary. They have a 10 year old daughter, Hannah, who is proving to be quite a fisherwoman. And, on Oct. 8, they added a brand new baby girl to their family, Ella Victoria. Dave says, "Happy baby. Happy family."

## D2L Patent Lawsuit Update

Desire2Learn (D2L), the instructional management system (IMS) used by all MnSCU institutions, has been involved in a patent infringement lawsuit with Blackboard (another IMS) since 2006.

At that time, Blackboard (Bb) filed a patent infringement lawsuit against Desire2Learn over a patent granted to Bb by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO).

In a trial held in Lufkin, Texas in February 2008, the court dismissed the majority of Bb's claims. However, the court did find D2L infringing on one aspect of the patent.

D2L was ordered to pay Blackboard \$3

million, a number far less the initial amount of \$17 million that Bb had demanded. That money is currently held in escrow, pending D2L's appeal and a patent review.

The court also ordered an injunction against D2L, and in response,

D2L revised its software to remove the aspect that the court found infringing.

All of D2L's U.S. clients upgraded to the revised non-infringing version by June 2008. Blackboard then requested that the court

find D2L in contempt, claiming that the revised version (8.3) infringes. The court denied that request.

In 2006, the Software Freedom Law Center filed a request to have the PTO re-examine the patent.

D2L has made a similar request and the patent review process is pending.

The PTO, in a non-final action, has already rejected all of Blackboard's patent claims.

D2L is confident that the patent will be overturned, and the judgment of \$3 million will be returned to them.

More information can be found at Desire2Learn's patent blog:

<http://www.desire2learn.com/patentinfo/>

We would love to hear from you! Please send your ideas for future editions to: [Valerie.Schmidt@csu.mnscu.edu](mailto:Valerie.Schmidt@csu.mnscu.edu)

## Tuition Waiver Update

Since the launch of the Tuition Waiver system on October 13, users have entered over 1,187 tuition waivers into the system. We've had minimal reports of defects (3) and just a handful of training issues.

The feedback from HR users and Tuition Waiver Processors has been very positive. We are on track to release the system to employees by the end of November.

For more information on Tuition Waiver, please see the October edition of The Scoop.



## Where are We?

Can you guess which city this ITS office is located in?

- The *BizJournal* recently ranked this town #7 in the nation on its 2008 Dreamtowns List.
- It's name meant greenish-blue earth to the Dakota Indians that first settled there.
- It has it's own symphony orchestra and ballet.
- Home of the "Moondogs".
- Home to the last 40-foot Happy Chef statue.
- You're likely to see a Mn Vikings player while eating at Jake's Stadium Pizza at a

certain time each year.

- This city was the setting for the Betsy-Tacy series by Maud Hart Lovelace.

**Good Luck!**

*(The answer is on the last page.)*

## REGIS is Coming!

What is REGIS you may ask? REGIS is a multi-dimensional software development effort focused on helping campuses help students with payments.

It is both a framework to promote integrated business planning and a program that will make more efficient and effective, the manual and electronic processes related to student registration from first click to final payment.

According to Bill O'Brien, Finance Division Project Manager and lead for the REGIS planning and implementation efforts, visioning for REGIS began in 2006.

Campus and Office of the Chancellor staff involved in the Finance Division's business process realignment efforts had asked, "What is the goal for all of the IT system changes we are working

on? How do we tie these payment-related processes together in a way that students can understand and easily navigate?"

The visioning results provided content for a business case approved in September 2007 by the system's Enterprise Investment Committee.

In the summer of 2008, the REGIS Steering committee, a cross-divisional group convened by Tim Stoddard, Associate Vice Chancellor for Financial Planning, met to identify program objectives and project deliverables.

Those deliverables fall into four categories:

- A "backbone" project that includes accounts receivable (AR) enhancements and integrated displays for reporting financial aid
- Automated solutions for purchases of

course materials and monitoring financial aid compliance

- Creation of a business partner site and portal
- Improved functionality for PSEO students and collections efforts

The first implementation project is the Phase I Backbone. Planning for this project is currently under way; it will address many critical customer requirements and will transform the AR module of ISRS into a Java enterprise edition (J2EE) web application.

For more information about this or other phases of the REGIS project, visit the ITS Division website and click on <http://www.its.mnscu.edu/projects/current/regis/index.html>

## EIC Process *cont.*

### How are projects prioritized and approved?

The project prioritization and approvals process is structured according to the size of a proposed initiative's operating budget.

Over \$100,000 needs to be approved by the EIC. Under \$100,000 is approved by the sr. vice chancellor and vice chancellors

channel.

At startup, available resources are allocated, a project manager is assigned and a kickoff meeting is held to launch the initiative.

### What is the status of current approved projects?

You can find up-to-date information on the status of approved projects at <http://www.its.mnscu.edu/projects/index.html>

For more information about the EIC governance process, contact Tiffni Deeb at [Tiffni.Deeb@csu.mnscu.edu](mailto:Tiffni.Deeb@csu.mnscu.edu).



Happy Thanksgiving  
Everyone!