MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Technology Committee   **Date of Meeting:**   November 16, 2010

Agenda Item: Follow-up to OLA Evaluation of the System Office

☐ Proposed
Policy Change   ☐ Approvals
Required by
Policy   ☐ Other
Approvals   ☐ Monitoring

☒ Information

Cite policy requirement, or explain why item is on the Board agenda:
The Technology Committee will be provided with progress reports on the resolutions of the
findings cited by the Legislative Auditor in its February 2010 report, *MnSCU System Office*. The
information presented will assist the committee in meeting the second goal to deliver the technology
related activities that are in response to OLA audit.

Scheduled Presenter(s):
    Darrel Huish, Vice Chancellor – Chief Information Officer
    Carolyn Parnell, Chief Operations Officer

Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:

Background Information:

INFORMATION ITEM
Follow-up to OLA Evaluation of the System Office

BACKGROUND
In early 2009, the Chair of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees and Chancellor McCormick requested the Legislative Audit Commission to authorize an evaluation if the Office of the Chancellor, including an examination of administrative functions. The study was approved with the work undertaken in the fall of 2009 and final report released February 2010. Several recommendations addressed operations within the Finance and Information Technology divisions of the Office of the Chancellor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
"The system office should improve its selection and implementation of new IT projects by (1) surveying campus users on their needs and the performance of new systems; (2) allotting additional time for user testing and training; (3) improving IT system data dictionaries and user manuals; and (4) closely tracking the status of individual projects to ensure that they are implemented in a timely, cost-effective way." (page 80 of the report)

ITS reports the following progress on the action plan to address these recommendations:

Action Plan: – Survey campus users on their needs and the performance of new systems
In spring of 2010, a campus communications preference survey was conducted as a first step to determining how best to communicate with campuses regarding any ITS work that affects them. The much preferred method was email and listserves – a method which ITS already uses consistently. We are now in the process of contracting with Mankato State University to re-conduct a past survey with the addition of more specific questions regarding campus' satisfaction with ITS services and systems. It is expected that this survey will begin in November.

Action Plan: – Allot additional time for user testing and training
To address this item, ITS began to rigorously conduct user testing for its Students First projects. An outside contractor (Fredrickson Communications) was hired to find students/users and get their feedback on ISRS changes. We will continue to use this contractor for ongoing Students First deliverables. Taking it a step further, we have now hired a usability architect who will work directly with our system architects, business analysts and developers to ensure optimum usability of all student and staff related applications going forward.

Action Plan: – Improve IT system data dictionaries and user manuals
A SharePoint Reporting and Data Services link within the Minnesota State Colleges and

Universities SharePoint Portal Server has been created as a central repository for documentation of our production data marts, enterprise products, processes and procedures. We are now able to dynamically generate data, table and column information on all data objects. We have provided search capabilities to further drill into metadata; we can graphically present performance and usage information concerning ISRS production databases. We now offer this data via ITS websites, reports & graphs from dashboard command consoles.

Action Plan: – Closely track the status of individual projects, specify project deliverables more clearly in contracts and implement a contractor performance review process

In October of 2009, ITS began a re-engineering of its Project Management Office (PMO) processes and procedures. Many of these changes were designed to align with PMO industry best practices, but we also took into account the recommendations from the OLA audit. As a result, we have a much more open and better-managed project process and not only are projects closely tracked, the status of each project is widely communicated in meetings, web sites and communication plans. Each project that requires any contract or staff augmentation now has a Statement of Work prepared prior to the onset of work that is signed by the contractor and by ITS. This statement of work defines the expected time frame and deliverables of each contract/contractor and is closely tracked throughout the length of the project. At the completion of the contract, an evaluation and performance review of the contractor and the work delivered is conducted and signed off on by all parties.