

2011-2012 Luoma Leadership Academy (Cohort 6)

Team 4 Action Learning Project Executive Summary

ISRS Enhancement Request Tracking System (IERTS)

Project Scope

Create a project proposal to improve the request, prioritization, status communication, and transparency of the enhancement request process for ISRS enterprise systems.

Background

The concept of this project was born due to an experience that our sponsor, Rochester Community and Technical College, had with an ISRS enhancement request. They submitted a request a couple of years ago to have a couple fields added to the printed student schedule. They only received minimal status feedback and found out only recently that the request had been implemented. They didn't receive any communication from the System Office, but rather they stumbled upon it through their own use of ISRS. There had to be a better way to track and communicate requests, and thus, the purpose of this project was born.

The general approach that we recommend to solve the problem is to develop a web-based enhancement request intake and tracking system. ISRS users would have one central web site where they could go to submit enhancement requests, view their status, view enhancement requests submitted by others, and even vote and comment on requests.

This project would improve communication, transparency, and understanding of the enterprise system's project prioritization process. Campuses would learn about new enhancement requests and have the opportunity to comment and rank project proposals. This would give MnSCU ITS more guidance and clarity on system-wide enhancements which would benefit the majority of users without restricting others.

Team Charge

1. Research other MnSCU institutions to see if they are having the same problem and determine their campus needs regarding this project.
2. Research and define the current processes for submitting and prioritizing enhancement requests.
3. Determine the information campuses want to be able to view about each project.
4. Explore the feasibility of this project.
5. Create a project proposal document ready for implementation upon approval.

Project Tasks and Timelines

July 2011 Week 1 of Leadership Academy. Teams, sponsors and projects are assigned and have first meeting.

Dec 2011 Team/sponsor meeting

Feb 2012 Luoma Annual Gathering and Team/Sponsor meeting

April 2012 Team meeting with MnSCU System Office administration

April 2012 Team meeting to discuss System Office meeting outcome

May 2012 Team member create and review a mock interface demonstrating desired features and functionality.

June 2012 Gather/organize feedback from stakeholders (business groups, administration, project sponsors, MnSCU ITS) to report back to the group

July 2012 Finalize template and proposal; present to project sponsors and Academy

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Key Findings

- ISRS users can submit enhancement requests through their user groups, but prioritization and review is inconsistent among the groups. There is no way to determine which enhancement requests have been received, approved or prioritized by MnSCU, nor any way to track their status.
- This could be a relatively simple application, which IT developers estimated could be completed in as little as 2-3 weeks, requiring little ongoing costs and support after implementation. Technology currently utilized in MnSCU, such as RCTC's Idea Hive and MnSCU's RightNow Technologies, are possible tools. Commercial and open source applications are also available.
- Stakeholders were in unanimous support of the need for such a tool (with caveats). Stakeholders whose feedback we solicited included our project sponsors from Rochester Community and Technical College (Don Supalla, President; Ginny Boyum, Dean of Academic Affairs; and Scott Sahs, CIO), Admissions Office Business Group, Financial Aid Officers Business Group, Registrar Business Group, and campus users from data entry staff through administration, supervisors, deans, vice presidents and presidents.

Leadership Lessons Learned

- Clearly set goals and objectives.
- Manage time effectively—this includes scheduling blocks of office time for yourself.
- Work with your strengths.
- Parts of the journey were uncomfortable.
- Communication is key!
- Distance and varying schedules made it difficult to reach objectives, but technology helps. Skype is our friend!
- It's OK to not know all of the answers -- ask questions continually. Seek and accept help. Delegate!
- Find a "mentor" whom you trust.
- "You get out of it what you put into it." Some leadership traits may be innate, but others must be developed, practiced and purposeful.

Project Team Members

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Project Sponsors

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