

August 5, 1998

MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents

FROM: Brenda H. Rogers
Vice President for Administration

SUBJECT: Library Automation Contract

One of the items on my list to discuss with you at the Presidents' Association meeting in New Bern was the library automation contract which we currently have with Ameritech for the Dynix Automation Center (DAC). However, I skipped this item to save time and now realize that I should have taken a few minutes to discuss. Let me share with you the reasons that we are having to bid on the library automation system.

This past fiscal year the DAC Contract Team recommended that the existing contract with Ameritech Library Services be extended for one year, in part because the pricing from Ameritech seemed high. The System Office forwarded the request for a one-year extension to the Purchase and Contract Division. We were informed that state purchasing regulations limit all contracts to a maximum of three years, including extensions, and that any exception to this policy must be approved by the State Purchasing Officer, Mr. Arthur Leaston. In approving our subsequent request for such an exception, Purchase and Contract restated the requirement that the contract be subject to the regulations for competitive bidding. The State Board of Community Colleges approved the contact extension with the understanding that we would follow the State Purchase and Contract regulations to seek competitive bids.

We are now faced with a very short time-frame within which we must comply with the competitive bidding requirements since we must allow a minimum of six months for possible conversion to a new system if that is the result of the competitive bid. We have proposed a two-step process:

1. Develop a Request for Information (RFI) and send it to all potential vendors to determine the feasibility of meeting our requirements, the estimated cost and timetable and to identify potential bidders (to be completed by September 1998).

Presidents
Page 2
August 5, 1998

2. Based on the evaluation of the RFI responses, develop a detailed bid specification to be used in a formal bid process (to be completed by November 1998).

If the results of the RFI and/or competitive bid indicate that no vendor other than the existing vendor can meet our requirements and/or timetable (in the event that a conversion would be required), then we would have the justification for requesting an additional extension or a sole-source contract.

The DAC Steering Committee and Council of Community College Library Administrators (CCCLA) have identified individuals to serve on the Contract Team, and both organizations will have several opportunities to participate in the RFI and competitive bid processes. Bob Blackmun will serve on the Contract Team and as the System Office representative he will have a single vote. We hope that the library staff members in all of the community colleges recognize the importance of this work and give it the attention that it deserves.

Let me assure you that if the analysis of the responses to the RFI or the bids provides justification, we will pursue a sole-source contract or an extension of our current contract. We do believe that the competitive bid process may result in better pricing than we could get if we were not going out to bid. If you have questions or concerns, either Bob Blackmun or I would be glad to discuss the issue with you.

BHR:sh

cc: Dr. Barry W. Russell
Mr. Bob Blackmun
Ms. Pam Doyle

CC-98-232
Paper Copy