Framework for Decision Making
With Regard to the Acquisition of Software-Based Applications

Prologue
An introductory statement should be developed that addresses basic questions, including, but not limited to:

1. Why is this needed?
   a. Assumption: There is an increased in value of having functional organizations take a role in evaluating acquisitions tied to functional areas.
   b. Identify: significant priority or early application which drives higher level emergency
   c. Cost: with (severely) constrained resources, there is an implicit process that must emerge to address TCO and streamline procurement processes (e.g., duplicate titles with similar features)

2. Discuss effect of vertical applications / bolt-ons in CMS Environment and other core campus services (e.g., messaging, calendaring, teaching & learning environments)

3. Discuss candidate application’s role in an integrated, cost effective, functional, enterprise-wide service model, including:
   a. service and support (start-up and ongoing, including staffing needs; roles of centralized and decentralized units, e.g., LAN Coordinators and non-technical staff)
   b. infrastructure considerations (e.g., extensibility, open standards)
   c. need to make sure it doesn’t violate any back-end or core business services (e.g., administrative, teaching and learning)
   d. flexibility while sustaining consistent operating efficiency and integration

Key / Critical Steps
1. Requirements definition
   a. Unique / specific / more general
2. Problem definition
   a. Fix / solve / improve / strategic
3. Service and support definitions (e.g., Help Desk, Training, workstation support)
4. Why can’t we do this some other way? What is unique or specific in the proposed solution being sought / or that has been found?
5. Replace / Substitute / Eliminate / Combine
6. Integration Requirements with other University Systems
   a. Is the proposed solution solving a functional problem (as opposed to a university service problem)
   b. Evaluation of scalability / supportability / integration vs. “ease of use”/specific need
7. Vendor Evaluation / Negotiation
8. What is the time frame for implementing the proposed solution?
9. What are the key milestones and “measures of success”? 

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10. What is the exit strategy & timeline for the proposed solution?

Cost Information
1. What are the easy-to-identify costs – out of the box?
2. Collateral funding issues: are funds currently available? How could this be funded (e.g., speed bumps, cost avoidance, business case, elimination of xxx???)
3. What are the hidden / hard-to-find costs – e.g., inadvertent consumption of unidentified resources (e.g., Degree Works eating up the mainframe)
4. What are the functional costs / requirements?
5. What are the system administration costs / requirements?
6. What are the memory & storage costs / requirements?
7. What are the bandwidth costs / requirements?
8. What are the transaction costs / requirements?
9. What are the on-going maintenance costs / requirements (including staffing needs)? What is the expected cost increase curve for future support?
10. What are the on-going cost savings?

Decision Making – Who needs to be involved/informed:
1. Have the committees been engaged and informed? Do they approve?
2. Have the functional areas been involved? Do they approve? (e.g., LAN Coordinators, non-technical staff)
3. How have policy issues been addressed? Approved?
4. Does the proposed solution meet university data security requirements such as confidentiality of the data, integrity of the data, accessibility / reliability of the systems, legal requirements, etc.
5. Have key constituents (e.g., Academic Senate) been involved? Do they approve?

General Environment
1. Is this a good fit? For the Campus? Technically? Operationally? Strategically?
2. Have the rules been followed in a clear, precise, honest fashion (e.g., procurement)
3. How does this fit into the ITS strategic plan? Teaching and learning efforts of the University?
4. Is this solution compatible with the existing campus IT infrastructure?
5. Is this solution an “industry standard” or is it proprietary?
6. Are there considerations with external entities and/or vendor management issues that should be considered when implementing? (e.g., security, network, service level agreement)