

September 25, 2008

09-017

APPROVE EXEMPTION FROM FORMAL COMPETITIVE
PROCESS AND AWARD THE CONTRACT TO BLACKBOARD,
INC. FOR THE PURCHASE OF LICENSE AND SYSTEMS
MAINTENANCE

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FINANCIAL
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REPORT: The Distance Learning Education Department of Academic and Student Affairs has a need to purchase additional licenses and continue maintaining the Blackboard Learning Management System. This system is used as the platform for online courses, serving nearly 30,000 enrollments annually in over 450 course sections and 6 programs. It also hosts its courses on Blackboard's server infrastructure, providing high-level stability and backup that does not affect PCC's computing services. As the demand for online learning has grown the College has added services and capacity purchased from Blackboard. The contract consolidates to meet growth, address some emerging problems with slow response for students and faculty in the online courses, and improve technical support from Blackboard. The Department anticipates having an on-going contract with Blackboard for these types of services. The contract amount will exceed the \$100,000 threshold, thus requiring a formal solicitation process.

The College has been utilizing Blackboard's services for several years now and this company was selected based on their proven product and well-supported system. There are a few other vendors who can provide similar services but it is not in the best interest of the College to do a re-selection process at this time based on the following reasons: 1) Student learning will be affected because the change will

interrupt existing online courses and programs; 2) Evaluation and transition to another system might require a long period of time that could disrupt existing online courses and programs. The Department requests continued contracting with Blackboard for up to five (5) years.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board of Directors authorize the Department to continue to contract with Blackboard, Inc. for purchasing licenses and continuous maintenance of the system. The contract will be valid through the year 2014 with the estimated expenditure of \$140,000 for the current fiscal year; \$150,000 for 2010-2012 and by 2013-2014, the cost will be \$170,000 annually. Funding will be from the General Fund.