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Office of the Registrar

To: NMT Purchasing Department
From: Heather Juarez, Interim Registrar

Date: April 20, 2022
RE: Coursedog vendor product

This memo is to justify the reason to proceed in partnering with the catalog, curriculum, and scheduling software product company of Coursedog. After renegotiations with Coursedog they lowered their fee to meet the needs of NMT. Coursedog is not the lowest priced software but is the only product that meets the needs of NMT as a University. Coursedog is the only product that aligns with at least 6 of the 7 strategic priority goals in the strategic plan of NMT.

A committee formed of various University staff and faculty from the following areas met to research (via internet, industry e-newsletters, and other colleges) available sources, products and companies that offer a single solution for an electronic catalog, curriculum and scheduling in order to review demonstrations from those companies: Key stakeholders consisted of members from the departments of Registrar, Graduate Studies, Faculty, Academic Deans, Academic Affairs, and the University's Technology support department.

The companies preliminarily reviewed were: Coursedog, Course leaf, Digarc (modern campus), and Ad Astra, which then had been narrowed to 3 software products for demonstration and comparison. The 3 products that were deemed comparable and fit the need to be demonstrated were: Course leaf, Coursedog, and Digarc. Ad astra was not demonstrated or quoted as the company only offers software product for scheduling needs and not course catalog.

At the conclusion of the software demonstrations one product clearly stood out amongst the others as the software that meets the needs of the multiple stakeholders involved in the committee and the best option for the University. After comparison of the products the following is notes from the staff in the Registrar concerning the functionality (or lack thereof) of the various options that they investigated for the three software packages in question.

Coursedog clearly stood out for key planning and assessment functions that the other two packages did not support. Notes from Registrar staff follow:

"We were looking into implementing one web solution to take care of multiple processes and have fewer integrational issues across our current SIS systems. The four main areas that need immediate attention are scheduling catalog, curriculum approval process flows, and event schedule.

We were looking into a couple of specific functions during the search.

- Fully integrated platform and bi-directional Banner integration to avoid manual data entry, which is a challenge right now.
- A single source of solution for curriculum and scheduling data with visibility on approved and proposed changes and approval processes for the committees
- Flexible and fully configurable workflows for proposing new courses and programs also changes to existing courses/programs.
- Automated optimization and policy enforcement to ensure the schedule aligns with a student, section, and faculty needs.
- Built-in scheduling analytics to provide insight into scheduling bottlenecks and enrollment trends.
- An ongoing version history and activity log of individual courses and programs and changes, making it easier to navigate for future references.
- Curriculum data automatically feeds an actionable, mobile-friendly, and branded catalog.
- The online catalog is easy for students to use.

[redacted]

We went through three vendors, out of which Coursedog offered many solutions in different areas that we needed help. The product also provided a way to develop our process flow for the curriculum section."

Digarc does offer software product similar to coursedog, however in comparision four Registrars in a row ([redacted] all evaluated products associated with "Omni", specifically "Modern Campus Acalog", and found such products sub-par. Attached is the link to that catalog here,

because when one peruse their sales pitch on that link, it reflects an alarming lack of understanding of academic catalogs (https://moderncampus.com/products/catalog-management.html). Their website indicates that the product enables continuous changes of the catalog, and decentralized access for changes. These are the exact opposite of what one wants in an academic catalog, because the catalog is our annual contract with students, by which all academic requirements for their four-year program are set and "fixed in stone". As a result, the catalog only changes once per year. And, indeed, making it easy for multi-point access to change the catalog is a recipe for a catalog that is not protected from sudden changes by (presumably) innocent mistakes from parties that might not be aware of the fixed, contractual character of the catalog.

Courseleaf does not offer all the modules in request as they specialize in Catalog and Curriculum solely, and therefore do not meet the needs of the University.

[redacted]