

**Bowling Green State University**  
**BG@100 Action Item**  
**ESC Submission: February 11, 2008**

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**Identification Information:**

<i>Reference Number</i>	CSS-A005
<i>Functional Area</i>	Financial Aid
<i>Title</i>	Department of Education File Transfer and Reconciliation
<i>ESC Submission</i>	February 11, 2008
<i>ESC Decision Requested By</i>	February 11, 2008

**Issue Description:**

Data files that are a part of federal student aid related programs are currently transferred to or from BGSU using a custom "mainframe to mainframe" (M2M) process. Examples of these files include the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data, Direct Loan information, and data related to the Federal Pell, ACG, and SMART grants. The delivered PeopleSoft functionality does not provide for this M2M capability. In order to complete each incoming and outgoing data file exchange, PeopleSoft requires up to 5 manual and individual steps per file type. Since the Office of Student Financial Aid (SFA) processes up to three different aid years at a given time, the number of file exchanges for one process is tripled and the number of steps to complete that one process increases to 15. In addition, SFA feels that the current M2M process has allowed for more efficient system processing and allocation of office resources which will be needed in the future to accommodate for other business process changes within the PeopleSoft implementation.

**Background Information:**

The BGSU custom M2M process was implemented 4 years ago to improve operational efficiency and it has been very successful. It is made up of a combination of BGSU custom developed programs combined with the TDClient software. TDClient is Department of Education (ED) software that allows BGSU to connect to an electronic mailbox so that we can transfer files to and from the ED computers and ours. This is done via a secure network connection over the Internet.

Using the M2M process eliminated the need for SFA staff members to manually connect to the electronic mailbox, import and/or export files from or to their desktop, and finally work with ITS staff to push data into or unload data out of SAM (SFA's current financial aid software package on the mainframe). Since many of the M2M components run on a daily basis, the automated process relieved the staff members (in both SFA and ITS) of unnecessary and redundant tasks, and freed them for more important work within the office.

There are several individual M2M components (both inbound and outbound) that make up the list of processes. Within each component, there can be inbound and outbound processes, multiple data files, and multiple years of data. The file processing components include:

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ISIR and Correction Record Processing - (FAFSA related data files)

- Currently 8 types of files and up to two different aid years processed at a time

Direct Loan Processing – (Originations, Disbursements, and Reconciliations)

- Currently 7 types of files and up to three different aid years processed at a time

PELL, ACG, and SMART Grants

- Currently 5 types of files and up to three different aid years processed at a time

Entrance and Exit Interviews for Direct Loans

- Currently 2 types of files

NSLDS Loan History Information

- Currently 2 types of files

Due to the redundant nature of the tasks required for processing (pulling the files in and pushing them back out to ED), the delivered PeopleSoft solution is highly inefficient. Absent automated intervention, SFA would have to revert back to their prior situation from 4 years ago where one staff member was allocated almost completely to this file processing effort.

Finally, many PeopleSoft schools are using a combination of TDClient software along with custom scripts and programs to automate this process. This type of customization would be considered a wrap around to the PeopleSoft system. The University of Michigan (U of M) has shared their process/code files with the PeopleSoft user community. In addition to the file load component, there is also an audit process that runs to ensure that all files have been loaded into the correct CSS data tables. Modification of their processes to BGSUize them will reduce the amount of time needed to develop and maintain a completely automated file exchange setup. Since BGSU will be using the same PeopleSoft database definitions along with the TDClient software, the changes needed to make it work will be somewhat limited in nature. Examples of changes will include replacing the values of ED user names, computer server names, and file directories with BGSU values. Lastly there will be the removal of extra processing that U of M does for their Law and Medical schools.

**Alternatives:**

Alternative #1:

Utilize PeopleSoft as Delivered and load each file manually. Job responsibilities would need to be shifted to accommodate the heavy workload and additional human resources may be required to manage the file processing activities.

Alternative #2:

Modify the U of M programs to create a process to meet the BGSU SFA requirements for automated file processing.

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Alternative #3:

Develop a completely new custom solution inside the PeopleSoft application to meet the BGSU SFA requirements to automate file processing.

*The following table shows the pros and cons for the alternatives identified above.*

#	Alternative	Pros	Cons	Notes
1	Utilize PeopleSoft as delivered and Load each file/message class manually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses only delivered functionality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy volume of manual processes</li> <li>Can only execute one process/message class at a time.</li> <li>Increased risk for error with large amount of manual steps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes current service level backwards</li> <li>Will require additional resources in SFA.</li> </ul>
2	Modify U of M programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proven success with existing process in a Production installation.</li> <li>Significant cost savings for labor and time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a process outside PeopleSoft.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expedites development time.</li> <li>Maintains current service levels.</li> <li>Manageable with current SFA resources.</li> </ul>
3	Create a new custom process within PeopleSoft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solution will meet user requirements inside of PeopleSoft system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning curve for PS tools may delay development time.</li> <li>Upgrade costs will be realized due to custom solution.</li> </ul>	

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**Costs - Alternative #1:** None, other than additional staffing requirements.

**Costs - Alternative #2:**

Estimated Hours for Original Implementation	80 Hours	
Estimated Cost for Original Implementation	\$12000	Use \$150 times hours
Estimated Hours per Each Upgrade	8 Hours	
Estimated Cost per Each Upgrade	\$400	Use \$50 times hours

**Costs - Alternative #3:**

Estimated Hours for Original Implementation	160 Hours	
Estimated Cost for Original Implementation	\$24000	Use \$150 times hours
Estimated Hours per Each Upgrade	12 Hours	
Estimated Cost per Each Upgrade	\$600	Use \$50 times hours

**Schedule Considerations:**

Alternative #1 – None.

Alternative #2 - While the customization must be production ready by **December 2008**, an earlier development time would facilitate ongoing modeling, testing and training activities.

Alternative #3 – While the customization must be production ready by **December 2008**, an earlier development time would facilitate ongoing modeling, testing and training activities

**Recommendation:**

**Alternative # 2** – Modify the U of M programs to create a process to meet the BGSU SFA requirements for automated file processing. This alternative will best meet the user need for an automated process with a reasonable development time and associated costs.

**Recommendation Supported By:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Project Role</b>
Tina Coulter	CSS Financial Aid Functional Lead
Jerry Ameling	CSS Financial Aid Technical Lead
Laura Emch	SFA Associate Director
Bill Gerwin	BG@100 Project Director
Robbie deLeur	CSS Financial Aid Consultant

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**ESC Decision:**

Bruce Petryshak for Alternative #2  
Linda Dobb for Alternative #2  
Al Gonzalez for Shirley Baugher for Alternative #2  
Ed Whipple for Alternative #2  
Sheri Stoll Absent

**ESC Decision Date:** February 11, 2008