“Make” Versus “Buy” Alternative.

The SIS Planning Group engaged in several months of analysis and investigation to gain a complete understanding of the upgrade alternatives available to UCR. This investigation and preparation included the following:

1. The development of a “SIS Requirements” document that outlines the features and functionality needed in UCR’s upgraded student information system (please visit www.cnc.ucr.edu/sis).
2. Day long vendor visits from PeopleSoft and SCT that included product presentations, overview of web offerings, presentation of data warehouse offerings, and technology infrastructure reviews.
3. A day long visit to the California State University at Los Angeles for a review and discussion of their PeopleSoft SIS implementation.
4. Two extended SIS “interviews” with the technical leadership at UCLA (which adopted a “make” decision in late 1990s).

Please refer to Appendix G for a complete analysis of the “make” versus “buy” alternatives available to UCR. Appendix H contains budget proposals for the “make” and “buy” alternatives.

In general, the “make” alternative allows UCR to remain in complete control of campus business processes and the SIS technical environment (as UCLA noted, the “make” alternative keeps the campus in “control of its own SIS destiny”). However, this alternative comes with significant costs, more or less equal to the costs associated with the vendor supplied SIS upgrade.

The “buy” alternative will not allow UCR to maintain complete control of its SIS functional and technical environments. However, vendor supplied SIS software has improved dramatically during the past several years and deployment of such software will provide the campus with a great deal of new functionality relatively quickly. Both software products reviewed by the SIS Planning Group would (in general) provide the same functionality currently enjoyed by the campus and would also address key unmet needs in various areas (web access, data warehouse, portal, etc.). It must be noted that the “buy” alternative also comes with significant costs, and over a five year period is actually slightly more expensive than the proposed “make” alternative.