



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
H. Martin Lancaster, President

May 19, 2006

MEMORANDUM

RESPONSE DEADLINE: 5/29/2006

TO: Chief Academic Officers
Distance Learning Administrators

FROM: Bill Randall, Associate Vice President
Learning Technology Systems

SUBJECT: Request for Proposal - Moodle Users Group: Open Source Learning
Management System Collaborative

The attached Request for Proposal for Moodle Users Group: Open Source Learning Management System Collaborative seeks community colleges to participate in an organized trial of Moodle open source Course Management System. Funding for this project is available through the Senate Bill 622 2+2 UNC/NCCCS Initiative. The State Board of Community Colleges has approved the use of 2+2 funding of this project. Colleges selected to participate in the project will receive training for an administrator and five instructors, administrative support, technical assistance, tools to migrate existing online courses to Moodle, and hosting services for Moodle application. Requirements for receipt of training, support, and resources include developing online courses and resources in Moodle and sharing such with other NCCCS institutions.

Currently, several NCCCS institutions are experimenting with Moodle independently in an attempt to find a cost effective alternative to proprietary CMS products. The Moodle Users Group is designed to consolidate these independent efforts, provide common training and resource development tools, and create a systematic approach to utilization and future transition to promising open source products. This consolidation of effort will be accelerated, in this case, by contracting with Remote-learner, a Moodle partner; an acknowledged experienced provider of Moodle technical support, training, and administration expertise.

Requests should be reasonable and appropriate for activities that must be consummated by December 10, 2006.

Proposals must be received no later than Monday, May 29, 2006. If you have questions concerning this request for proposal, do not hesitate to call me at (919) 807-7061.

Attachment

c: Presidents
Mr. Kennon Briggs
Dr. Delores Parker
Dr. Sandra Williams

CC06-117
Email

Overview

Proprietary instructional technology vendors propose major problems to higher education institutions and systems. Vendors that do not conform to technical standards place their clients in the unenviable position of continued reliance on proprietary systems that are unable to interface with third party, free ware, and open source products that offer tremendous advantages in costs and utility. Moreover, corporate mergers and acquisitions test the confidence that higher education clients have with proprietary vendors regarding (1) future access to client developed content stored in “locked” proprietary resources and (2) unfettered escalation of license costs.

Interest in “open source” instructional technology is becoming widespread in higher education across the United States generally and the Southeastern Regional Education Board (S.R.E.B.) member states in particular. Open source applications are “free ware,” in which the code used to author modifications or improvements to such applications are available at no costs. Users groups exist to (1) cooperatively solve problems, (2) share software enhancements and (3) identify ways to incrementally improve the applications for all users. Moodle is an open source Course Management System (CMS) originally developed by an Australian Ph.D. candidate to measure constructionist learning theory. PDP software code was selected to create an efficient and highly adaptable CMS platform. Moodle has emerged as one of two viable open source CMS products and currently has the most number of installations of all CMS products worldwide. Moodle has emerged as a flexible, customizable, instructional/learning platform that is adaptable to all major languages, is intuitive to use, and stable on open source operating systems and inexpensive hardware. Moodle user groups have already developed “tools” that can import courses and components from proprietary CMS courses directly into Moodle.

Open source products typically require customers to invest in programming for customization and/or compatibility in a variety of areas: student data, email, digital content, testing/assessment, administration, course development, and integration with other learning tools, databases, and services. Moreover, adoption of open source products, like any other software, requires training, technical support, and access to the product and development tools. In addition, migration of online resources developed in proprietary software to open source solutions must be factored into a complete cost of ownership of open source software.

Currently, several NCCCS institutions are experimenting with Moodle independently in an attempt to find a cost effective alternative to proprietary CMS products. The Moodle Users Group is designed to consolidate these independent efforts, provide common training and resource development tools, and create a systematic approach to utilization and future transition to promising open source products. This consolidation of effort will be accelerated, in this case, by contacting with Remote-learner, a Moodle partner; an acknowledged experienced provider of Moodle technical support, training, and administration expertise.

Request for Proposal – Moodle Users Group Development Centers

The North Carolina Community College System Office is extending a Request for Proposals (RFP) to colleges interested in becoming a Moodle Users Group Development Center. The deadline for proposals is **5:00 p.m. on May 29, 2006**. The purpose of the RFP awards:

- (1) Provide an opportunity for a selected number of NCCCS member institutions to receive training, tools, access, and the opportunity to use Moodle as an online delivery format;
- (2) Develop training and transition resources to assist other NCCCS institutions in adoption of Moodle;
- (3) Adapt Moodle open source Learning Management System to community college online, hybrid, and web-assisted traditional community college courses;
- (4) Use Moodle for staff development resources and committee activities;
- (5) Convert Blackboard or other proprietary CMS courses to Moodle for use in community college curriculum and OCE courses.

The NCCCS Moodle Users Group will provide administration training, instructor training, and Moodle hosting support for five Centers, each at a separate community college. Each Center will consist of one administrator and five instructors that will each receive training and resources from Remote-learner, Inc. the Moodle Partner contracted to provide training, technical support, and Moodle hosting services. *A college is eligible to receive support for only one Center.* Funding for the Moodle Users Group is provided through NC Senate Bill 622 establishing distance learning resources for the NCCCS/UNC 2+2 Project.

No travel funds are available through this award.

Travel and lodging for administrators and instructors for the initial training session are the responsibility of the colleges receiving awards. Training for administrators and instructors will take place the week of June 26 at community colleges to be determined. Administrators will participate in a one day training session, June 26. Instructors will participate in a two day training session. Two instructor workshops are scheduled - the first, June 27 & 28 and the second, June 29 & 30. All subsequent training, Help Desk, and work sessions will be conducted online using Elluminate collaboration software.

Proposal Review and Selection Process

A panel selected from members of the Distance Learning Council will evaluate each application that is received and completed by the deadline. Following the review of applications, results will be compiled to obtain individual proposal scores. Proposals will be rated on the following scale:

Institutional History of Support for Distance Learning and Infrastructure for Distance Learning	0-35
Implementation Strategies	0-25

Skills and Experience of Proposed Center Administrator	0-20
Local Commitment (travel)	0-10
Contribution to the Moodle Users Group	0-10
Total Possible Score	100 Points

Roles and Expectations

Utilization of high potential open source products in mission-critical applications offers promise to the NCCCS. Open source products typically rely on active and coordinated users groups. Successes of user groups are enhanced with technical assistance, training, and a common hosting environment.

The success of the Moodle Users Group depends upon the coordination between the colleges and the Learning Technology Systems Department of the NCCCS. It is important that college Centers understand the roles and expectations for performance. Colleges who are awarded grants will adhere to a set of general assurances outlined later in this document.

User Group Center Administrator

The college designee who serves as the center administrator is expected to perform the following tasks:

- Attend one of two System Office Center Administrators' Kick-off training sessions;
- Develop Moodle course shells for their college;
- Assist Remote-learner in migration of Blackboard or other proprietary CMS courses to Moodle server hosted by Remote-learner. Accommodations will be made for participating colleges using WebCT, Ucompass/Educator, or CampusCruiser;
- Interview and select instructors nominated by college(s) and recruit faculty if necessary;
- Prepare a migration/development plan for each of the courses with the System Office Moodle Users Group Co-coordinator;
- Lead and/or host monthly face-to-face or Elluminate meetings with instructors in Users Group to monitor progress and providing advice, motivation, instruction, and encouragement;
- Participate in Elluminate session with other Administrators and System Office Moodle Users Group Co-coordinator to ensure course development process is on track;
- Assure that all courses conform to laws of copyright and ADA guidelines;
- Assure that all courses conform to Moodle version of VLC Online Course Template;

- Complete final check-out of all Moodle courses and resources created in Moodle by December 10, 2006;
- Participate in Moodle Users Group evaluation session to be scheduled in early December 2006.

User Group Instructor

Each User Group Instructor is **expected to have documented experience in developing and utilizing online courses and/or resources** and perform the following tasks:

- Attend two day instructor training;
- Attend monthly face-to-face or Elluminate meeting sessions with User Group Administrator;
- Prepare and finalize a development plan for each Moodle courses and/or resource with User Group Administrator;
- Correspond regularly with the members of User Group sharing experiences, pooling knowledge, and establishing a team approach;
- Assure that all courses conform to laws of copyright and ADA guidelines;
- Assure that all courses conform to the VLC Online Course Template;
- Complete final check-out of all Moodle courses by December 10, 2006.

Moodle Users Group System Office Coordinator

- Select User Group Administrators and Instructors;
- Coordinate training, technical support, and hosting services provided by Remote-learner with Moodle User Groups;
 1. Training sessions for administrators and instructors,
 2. Development of Moodle VLC template,
 3. Creating of Moodle courses for all User Group Instructors,
 4. Copy Blackboard courses to Moodle Remote-learner,
- Participate in initial training sessions and monthly Elluminate meetings with Administrators;
- Assume responsibility for final Moodle courses and resources;
- Ensure Moodle course functionality;
- Coordinate final project evaluation and create assessment report of Moodle Users Group.

Preliminary Time Line

May 19, 2006	Proposal for Moodle Users Groups sent to colleges
May 29, 2006	Proposal for Moodle Users Groups due to System Office
June 2, 2006	Moodle Users Groups selected by System Distance Learning Council selection committee and awards announced
June 26, 2006	Moodle Administrator training workshop
June 27 & 28, 2006	Group A Moodle Instructor training workshop

June 29 & 30, 2006	Group B Moodle Instructor training workshop
July - November, 2006	Individual College User Group monthly meetings
July - November, 2006	User Group Administrators and Moodle Group Coordinator monthly meetings
December 10, 2006	Final review by System Office User Group Coordinator of all courses completed
January 1, 2007	All courses and resources developed by the Moodle Users Group available for System Office posting and college use

Each Center will receive Moodle training, support, and hosting services.

General Assumptions

Colleges who are awarded grants will adhere to the following set of general assurances:

- Identify college Moodle Administrator;
- Select five instructors to participate in Moodle training and course development;
- All Moodle courses and resources developed in Moodle Users Group activities will be shared with all NCCCS institutions;
- All administrators and developers will sign a Virtual Learning Community Copyright Release;
- Prepare a migration/development plan for each of the courses or needed resources with the System Office Moodle Users Group Co-coordinator;
- Participate in monthly face-to-face or Elluminate meetings with instructors in Users Group to monitor progress and providing advice, motivation, instruction, and encouragement;
- Assure that all courses conform to laws of copyright and ADA guidelines
- Assure that all courses conform to Moodle version of VLC Online Course Template
- Complete final check-out of all Moodle courses and resources by December 10, 2006.

2005-2006 Proposal for Moodle Users Group Centers

College: _____

Prepared by:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Proposed Moodle Users Group Administrator:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 29, 2006.

Return to the North Carolina Community College System by e-mail or fax to:

Dr. Bill Randall

Associate Vice President

Instructional Technology Systems

Phone: (919) 807-7061

Fax: (919) 807-7164

randallb@nccommunitycolleges.edu

This page must be completed and submitted in the format given. Please keep proposals to no more than 12 pages total.

General Assurances

_____ agrees to:
College Name

1. Provide release time for qualified employees to serve as (1) Moodle Users Group Administrator and (2) Moodle Users Group instructors. One Administrator and five instructors will be selected by each participating college for training to be scheduled and completed by June 30, 2006.
2. Adhere to the intellectual property policies governing the Virtual Learning Community.
3. Ascertain that the Community College is in compliance with applicable state and federal laws to promote equal opportunity for all participants without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or national origin.
4. Work cooperatively with the System Office Moodle User Group Coordinator in monitoring and evaluating the Moodle Users Group activities and participate in a final evaluation as requested.

Community College President

Date

Moodle Users Group Administrator

Date

Institutional History of Distance Learning and Infrastructure for Distance Learning (35 points)

Describe your Institution's history with distance learning. This might include enrollment figures, number and type of distance courses, faculty training programs, online student services, course development strategies, online support for face-to-face courses, a timeline of development of distance learning at your college, or other relevant data.

Institutional experience with Blackboard and other course management systems should be provided. Please list faculty and staff, likely to participate in the project, who have participated in online instruction and the Virtual Learning Community, including course developers, editors, trainers, administrators, and web or instructional designers.

Moodle Implementation Strategies (25 points)

Describe the importance of an open source course management system and the benefits Moodle can provide your college. Include a list of programs, courses and/or related resources that would be appropriate for Moodle migration or initial development in Moodle. Describe past experimentation with Moodle or other open source CMS products.

Skills and Experience of Proposed Users Group Administrator (20 points)

Please attach a resume for the proposed Users Group Administrator. Their experiences should emphasize project leadership, online instruction, curriculum development, and web development. The resume should also reflect the potential Administrator's skills in communication, project management, budget management, and problem solving. Technical skills such as Blackboard or other CMS administration, HTML, general Internet/web, and other relevant skills should be outlined. An understanding of online teaching (pedagogy and andragogy) and the qualities of excellent online instructional design are key.

Local Commitment (10 points)

Please describe college commitment to the project that includes travel funding for initial training and appropriate release time for Moodle course/resource development. No travel funds are available. Local colleges are responsible for all travel costs incurred by participation in Moodle Users Group. Release time will be required for administrator and instructors training sessions, monthly meetings, and Moodle course/resource development time. However, all efforts will be taken to reduce need for face-to-face meetings. All monthly meetings will be conducted via Elluminate.

Contribution to the Moodle Users Group (10 points)

Describe how your college can provide a unique contribution to the Moodle Users Group.