Jasig and Sakai Foundations Finalize Merger Plans

In 2010 the Jasig and Sakai Foundations undertook an evaluation of the benefits and feasibility of bringing our two organizations together. Following a positive initial investigation, work began after the 2010 EDUCAUSE conference to merge organizations. We are now approaching the final stages of this process and wanted to take this opportunity to report our progress.

The Jasig and Sakai Foundation Board of Directors have now independently elected four members from each of theirexisting Boards to serve on the "Founding Board" of the new common organization. A list of the members elected by each Board is included below. A Founding Board is a legal precondition for incorporating a new 501(c)3 Not-For-Profit entity which necessitates it formation at this point in the process. Although the Founding Board will not have any legal authority prior to incorporation they will be consulted and heavily engagedas we finalize the merger process. Once incorporated, community elections will be held to elect four additional Board Members (details of the election process are being finalized in the bylaws). Following a timeline to be established by the new Board (of no more than three years in length),members of the Founding Board will rotate off to allow their position to be filled by individuals elected directly by the combined communities.

Following approval by our two communities, we plan to file for incorporation early in the new year and gain non-profitstatus within the first quarter of 2012. The specific timeline for finalizing the incorporation process depends heavily on the how quickly we gain state and federal approvals.   During this time, the Founding Board will also likely be working to form an Advisory Council of international leaders within higher education to provide guidance as the new organizationmatures. Additional details on this Advisory Council and the merger, including an updated version of the bylaws and a draft membership model, will be released to our communities for review and comment in the coming weeks.

As we move into this final phase, we will also select a name for the merged organization. It is important to emphasize that bringing together Jasig and the Sakai Foundations will not dissolve or merge our respective software communities or projects. Existing brands will not go away, but will benefit from being exposedto the new audiences reached by the new organization. The Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment will still be promoted and maintained as the SakaiCollaboration and Learning Environment, Jasig uPortal as uPortal, and so on. The new organization will build on the successes of the past in developing brand recognition, without seeking to supplant existing brands. Managing this branding issue is critical, and our respective Boards have been dedicating significant attention to this issue. It is within this context that we are now seeking input and suggestions from our communities, and beyond, for the name of the new Foundation.

Next week, following the EDUCAUSE conference, we will be announcing a Community Naming Process which we hope will stimulate community members, instructors, and student groups to assist in this effortas means to draw on the wealth of expertise within our communities. As part of this initiative we are also releasing an updated version of a document articulating the value of the new organization which was first released in April 2011. The new version, which has been re-titled "The Value of a Common Foundation" (see attached, web version coming soon), provides new content based on feedback and questions from our communities. It is important that our new name reflect the communities and values of the new organization and we hope this updated document will be useful in identifying appropriate names for consideration. The final selection of a name for the new Foundation will be the responsibility of the members of the

Founding Board.

We thank all of the members of our communities, as well as the many other interested third parties that have provided invaluable feedback as we have made progress towards merging our two organizations. We truly believe that the new joined foundation will represent a positive step forward both for our founding communities, but also for the use of open source in institutions of higher education around the world.

Founding Board Members

    Jens Haeusser, University of British Columbia
    John Lewis, Unicon
    Josh Baron, Marist College
    Maggie Lynch, Thanos Partners
    Michael Feldstein, Cengage Learning
    Nate Angell, rSmart
    Robert Sherratt, University of Hull
    Tim Carroll, University of Illinois

Jens Haeusser
Chair, Jasig Board of Directors
Co-Chair, Jasig-Sakai Joint Working Group

Sent by email 17 October 1:22PM to jasig-announce@lists.ja-sig.org. The same announcement may have been sent to Sakai members as well.