December 7, 2023

TO: THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

FROM: KATHLEEN PLINSKE
           President

RE: FINANCIAL AID TECHNICAL CONSULTANT – STRATA INFORMATION SYSTEMS
           (SIG)

Valencia College requests approval to enter into an agreement with Strata Information Systems (SIG), to provide Financial Aid Technical consultants to support the technical configurations, integrations, and coding requirements for the operation of the Banner Financial Aid module. Given the heightened complexity of the federal FAFSA Simplification process and its impact on our internal procedures, securing specialized support is imperative. While the intent behind simplifying the application process for students and families is acknowledged and appreciated, its operational challenges are significant. Ensuring enrollment stability through access to financial aid programs is paramount, making it crucial for the College to engage high-quality expertise in this specialized work for effective support.

Valencia leveraged State Board Rule 6A-14.0734 (2)(f), F.A.C., and E&I Cooperative Agreement (CNR01502) to obtain the best possible price with their contracted vendor, Strata Information Systems (SIG) at a total cost of $574,800.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The President recommends that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College authorize the College to enter into an agreement with Strata Information Systems, Inc, to provide Financial Aid technical consulting services at a cost of $574,800.
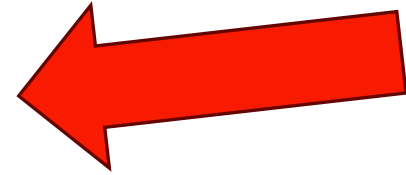
President

Financial Aid and Student Engagement (Portal) Support

Focus on the Foundation

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Next Phase of Work

- **Changes related to FAFSA simplification**

- **Replacement of portal (Atlas)**

- Full implementation of CRM to support advisor/student case management

- Implementation of educational planning tool

Financial Aid Support (SIG)

Financial Aid Changes for 2024-25
- Replace Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) with Student Aid Index
- Modify Title IV Funding Formula
- Modify definitions of family size
- Expand access to Pell Grants and maximum grant
- Streamline the FAFSA form

Importance of Financial Aid for Valencia College Students
- Our students received over $142m in aid in the 22-23 year
    - This aid includes Pell Grant funds for student expenses
- 44% of our students receive some type of financial aid

Strata Information Group (SIG) Consultant Support
   - The consultant support provides the financial aid and
     technology teams access to two full-time consultants for the
     entire 2024 calendar year as needed

   - The contract does not assume all hours will be needed and
     used. We will be able to scale the support as needed.

Student Engagement Portal Pathify

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Background and Search Process

- Our current portal will no longer be fully supported in late 2024

- Our goal was to find a portal that would provide:
    - A native mobile experience for students, faculty, and staff
    - More communication options (e.g., notifications)
    - Better engagement aligned with college role
    - Easier content management separated from our public website
    - Cloud-based solution to 'scale up' as needed
    - Provide connections that improve retention and graduation

- We used surveys, focus groups, and technical analysis

How is Pathify different?

Engagement Hub

Dynamically surfaces key information

Easily find anything relevant

Connects to people (not just systems)

Serves every constituent

Pathify

Next Steps

- Finalize contract

- Demonstrations to college groups and initial training

- Transfer of content and set up of new features

- Tiered release to students followed by faculty/staff

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Questions?