

19 September 2002

Memo: University Faculty Council

From: Don Hossler, Associate Vice-President for Enrollment Services

Subj: Academic Priority Issues in the PeopleSoft Conversion Project

Analysis of the functionality of PeopleSoft, as delivered, in the area of student records has identified a range of significant gaps between what PS can do and the practices and policies supported by our current systems. The PS project team has made broad estimates of the likely costs of creating programs to bridge these gaps (and updating those bridges with each subsequent PS release). Student Enrollment Services and system units and faculty need to evaluate the cost-benefit issues entailed in bridging each gap. Unless truly minimal-cost solutions are engineered as we become more familiar with the PS structure, funding for changes will not exist within the SES budget, and there will ultimately be impact on campus service units and academic unit budgets. The new SES Academic Priorities Committee will serve as a clearinghouse for these discussions.

A partial list of functionality and other related issues appears below; these include issues with direct impact on policy, and issues that concern practice norms and service quality.

1. **Grade Replacement** (FX & similar policies). PS calculates academic standing, probation, etc., at the *institutional* (all-IU) level. It can accommodate grade replacement policies and course repeat rules, but not multiple policies by campus or by schools/programs on a campus. Policies in this area are a faculty prerogative, and IU has a tradition of campus autonomy with unit variation. It is not yet clear how high the cost of modifying PS in this area will be, but it does not appear to be low.
2. **Pass/Fail**. At present, the P/F status of course enrollees is by policy not revealed to instructors. In PS this status is displayed. The cost of modifying PS to fit policy does not appear to be high.
3. **Waitlist**. PS assigns students to course waitlists on the section level, rather than the course level, meaning that students cannot be flexibly waitlisted within a multi-section course, or be automatically assigned to newly opened sections. The cost of modification varies according to the target functionality. Replicating the current Automatic Course Exchange system would be high in cost; the cost of more modest solutions to provide flexibility would vary, but remain significant.
4. **“Raincheck.”** Students now request and receive guaranteed priority enrollment for future semesters when they encounter a closed course required for their programs. PS does not support a raincheck function. The cost of building one is relatively low.
5. **GradPact**. The academic advising function in PS does not allow the option of including GradPact benchmarks at the time of degree audits, which is an essential feature of GradPact policy implementation. It would be possible at significant cost to develop features that would include GradPact benchmarks on all degree audits, but not to retain the option of including or excluding them.
6. **Midterm Reports**. PS does not deliver midterm grade reports, other than deficiency reports. The cost of developing a midterm report capability does not appear to be high.

7. Course Numbering. The logic in PeopleSoft is not configured precisely the way our current systems are. To get the most functionality out of PeopleSoft, it would be optimal for us to consider using a slightly different course numbering structure. For example in PeopleSoft, ENG W131 could become one of the following: ENG 131; English-W 131; ENG 131W. Any of these configurations would allow us to optimize the logic embedded in PeopleSoft, but if we insist that it remain exactly as is, some other desirable functionality in the software will not work and represent a substantial cost.

8. General Comments. Working through this implementation brings to the surface a number of issues that impact faculty policy and lay bare some academic policies that may serve academic units well, but also raise questions about the extent any one campus is really an institution, or whether we are a confederation of separate small colleges held together by a common payroll system. In addition, questions become obvious about the impact of our policies on students. For example, many campuses and academic units on the large campuses, as well as system schools like SPEA may have different policies about how taking classes over again how they count in a GPA. PeopleSoft does not automatically adjust for repeat rule policies on each campus or academic unit. Thus, if a student changed majors three times in one day in three different schools or colleges, he/she could have three different official GPAs. There are a host of these kinds of issues we will continue to deal with. We will also continue to deal with the issue of the ability in the first 2-4 years of each campus/academic unit being able to make requests for policy changes that have to be reflected in the PeopleSoft product.