The Update

DAU

April/May 2010

Student Information System

GSA on board

After months of evaluating various contracting shops, DAU has chosen the U.S. General Services Association (GSA) National Capital Region (NCR) to assist in procuring its Student Information System. The SIS Core Team meets with GSA on a weekly basis, starting with the kick-off meeting March 19.

GSA will assist in preparing the SIS Acquisition Strategy, making sure DAU meets all federal regulations. They will also host a pre-proposal conference before the contract is awarded.

Special points of interest:

- April 14 and May 11 IPT meetings conducted virtually; the former due to a reference site visit. Previous due diligence includes:
  - 17 references,
  - 13 phone screens,
  - 9 surveys, and
  - 8 site visits
- Sponsor signed off on Requirements Document and Traceability Matrix and they were sent to GSA for review
- Answering questions from the Investment Review Board and the Business Process Re-engineering Assessment Team in preparation for the Defense Business Systems Management Committee (DBSMC) approval, anticipated in May

Magic Quadrant sees only small shifts among vendors

When Student Information System (SIS) Project Manager Diane Cunha sent Gartner Market Research a simple request for an update to its rankings, the reply revealed a contender for the top spot.

Cunha wrote, "We are interested in getting the 2009 update for Magic Quadrant for Higher Education Administrative Suites" and suggested a conference call. So on April 6, several members of the SIS Core Team spoke with a Gartner analyst.

Jan-Martin Lowendahl shared that Sungard Higher Education (Banner) has competition with PeopleSoft for Gartner's title as the industry leader. Gartner is also considering moving one student information system down a notch that they previously acknowledged as a challenger. Aging technology is an issue plaguing some vendors.

Gartner stated that it is not likely to release a 2009 Quadrant, but it is evaluating market scope due to market maturity. The company will conclude where the student information systems place based on peer reviews. The Magic Quadrant is divided into four regions: leaders, visionaries, challengers and niche players. Systems are judged on their ability to execute and completeness of product.

Getting the right answers

Look no further than the Help Desk for an example of the spectrum of student information systems' capabilities.

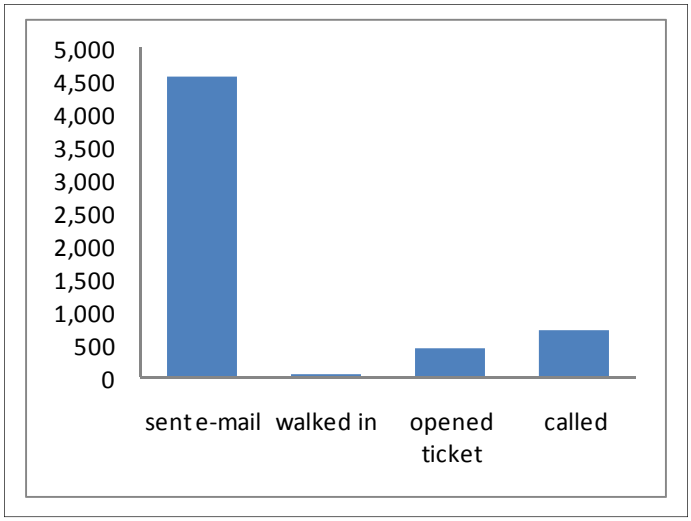
The Services and 4th Estate all use a contractor for assistance with their Help Desks. However, each uses the contractor to a different extent. The end product is one service with four different levels of results.

The Air Force receives detailed metrics of the tickets generated through its Help Desk, including the number of inquiries sent via e-mail, phone or walk in (as shown in graphic below). The other Components have varying degrees of reporting features.

Integrated Project Team (IPT) members representing the Services and 4th Estate shared aspects of their Help Desks at a monthly SIS IPT Meeting held March 17. The representatives emphasized that a lot of resources go into developing FAQs in response to the questions they receive.

A universal Help Desk approach is a consideration for the SIS project. However, individual Help Desks would likely remain busy after the SIS is implemented to serve the acquisition workforce with more specialized answers, also decreasing the turnaround time of replies.

The IPT also discussed House Armed Services Committee findings regarding the requirements process. In response to the HASC finding that the current process for defining requirements is too inflexible and prone to over-specification, The SIS Core Team has developed a full Mitigation Strategy to the findings and is following best practices when defining their requirements.



The Air Force Help Desk receives a detailed report of its Help Desk inquiries. This is a snapshot of the branch's numbers from October-March.