Letter of Intent

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Bloomington, ID

Michael Sessa
Executive Director, PESC
One Dupont Circle NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20036

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Re: Letter of Intent

Dear Michal Sessa,

I am pleased to submit this letter to notify PESC that Kuali Student intends to work collaboratively with PESC and the K-20 community to develop the following web services that facilitate more flexibility and open interoperability between education-focused technologies.

We propose developing and eventually submitting for approval key web services leveraging already established PESC standards that can be used by any organization or company to communicate student, course, program and administrative data. Additionally, Kuali Student will introduce core level service contracts to enable more comprehensive and streamlined concierge or customer relationship management related functionality. These services will enable administrative systems to share and communicate not only basic student data, but key student factors, and trends with any system connected to the Kuali student information system services. This includes systems such as degree audit, learning management, facilities and resource management, curriculum management, financial aid and learning plan.

Please note the attached Business Case that covers an historical overview, justification, and a description of the planned collaboration.

I am pleased on behalf of the Kuali Foundation and the Kuali Student initiative to submit this request and look forward to preparing standards that will enhance the way student administrative systems store, use and share information. I am designating Matthew Coombs as Kuali Student’s official representative to head this initiative on behalf of Kuali Student.

Sincerely,

Dan McDevitt
Kuali Student Director
The Business Case for development of a PESC Standard in Student System Information data structures, data sharing and system interoperability

Overview: The creation of a standard to officially store and communicate student information system data has been developed and contemplated by various organizations, but recent business drivers are driving the industry to rethink multiple factors in what is stored, how it is made available to administrators, how it is shared with external systems and how it is structured.

The evolution from XMLSchema based standards to Services oriented standards is evident in the proliferation of Web Service registries like EdUnify. Currently many vendor and providers publish their own Service Contracts to EdUnify. This is where PESC comes into the picture- the intent would be to create and govern a standard set of Service Contracts which describe the business of Higher Education. These Standard Service Contracts would be published via the EdUnify platform.

The evolution to Standard Service Contracts brings many benefits including the abstraction of business processes in a manner that allows consumers of Service Contracts to implement 1. their own variation of a business process with 2. their own selection of technology with 3. their own underlying data model. As an example, one institution may attain efficiencies with the scheduling of classes after Course Registration based on demand for classes while another institution may choose to stay with the typical process of scheduling classes ahead of Course Registration. The primary business benefit of Standard Service Contracts is that they outlast any strictly defined set of business processes and technology flavor of the day.

Kuali Student (KS) is executing on the vision of building a next generation Student Information System (SIS) with the following components:

- Service Contracts which abstractly describe SIS business processes. The Contracts are designed based on principles of Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) including the principle of loose coupling. These Service Contracts are perceived as “standards” within the Kuali Foundation. KS designs and governs Service Contracts based on business requirements provided by its member institutions. These Service Contracts are published via the KS web sites.
- Reference implementations of these Service Contracts to create a Kuali Student SIS Product. These reference implementations strive to implement a common set of business processes across institutions participating in the Kuali Student effort
- A User Interface (UI) which delivers a user experience that is in line with the user experience already delivered by popular Web 2.0 products (Facebook, etc.)

KS has delivered a Curriculum Management product which includes a set of Service Contracts that manage the life-cycle (from proposal to approval to retirement) of Learning Units. Learning Units are basic building blocks which can be assembled into Courses, Programs, Projects, Experiential Learning, etc at a higher education institution. The true benefit of a Learning Unit lies in its ability to meet the future needs for creating non-traditional learning experiences. SIS systems today do not provide enough flexibility to create these non-traditional learning units without a fair bit of customization and patchwork to traditional Courses and Programs.
The intent of this letter is to:

a) Highlight the opportunity posed by the potential convergence of these currently disparate efforts: PESC and Kuali Student. The objective of this convergence would be to collaboratively design and govern a set of Standard Service Contracts to define the business of Higher Education. These Service Contracts would be consumed by vendors and software developers to create Web Services implementing PESC provided Standard Service Contracts. Vendors, Institutions and individual software developers can then create applications that orchestrate disparate Web Services in the true spirit of Web 2.0.

b) Start the discussions around the specifics of the convergence of PESC and KS. Discussions should include questions around
   - How are Service Contracts designed?
   - How are changes to Service Contracts governed?
   - Synergies between PESC and KS: timing, resources, scope and prioritization

c) Propose a pilot effort between PESC and KS. The pilot can focus on creating Standard Service Contracts based off already existing KS Curriculum Management Service Contracts. This would include creating a standard Learning Unit Service Contract with supporting Service Contracts like Learning Objective, Academic Time Period, etc.