FY2024 Expansion Option Request Form – 3 page limit

Budget Request #

Budget Request Description (Link to Summary List)

Contact Name: Yvonne Kirby, OIRA

Itemize Components of Request (add additional rows if needed)	Index to be Funded	Annual Amount Requested	Fringe Benefit (79% for all FT emp, -40% - PT lect)	Index for Reallocation	(Reallocation Amount)	Total Annual Request	Additional Comments
Outcomes Assessment Projects software (formerly Aqua), by Watermark	PLAN01	$8,500				$8,500	This software organizes the student assignments used to assess general education learning outcomes.
				Total Annual Cost		$8,500	
				Start up - one-time cost			
				Net Requested Investment			

1. **Describe the existing program, if applicable, and justify the request in detail (e.g., establish new position include position title, student workers, training)**
   CCSU has been using assessment software by Watermark called Outcomes Assessment Project (OAP, formerly known as Aqua), to coordinate the assessment of general education learning outcomes for several years. OAP performs three main functions:
   - organizes the artifacts (student work) such that when a faculty member evaluates the work, he or she is never asked to assess student work from their own course (reduces bias)
   - records the scores from each faculty member assessing the artifacts (reduces recording and data entry errors)
   - ensures that every artifact is scored by two different faculty members (assessment best practice, levels out extreme scores)

   Without the software, assessment of general education learning outcomes would require significant additional staff resources. Alternative assessment models that don't rely on assessment software have been considered and they require significantly more time from faculty. Results from other models, including our previous model, are much more variable and are mostly specific to a department, meaning that the results from one department can't be generalizable to other departments with respect to what students have learned.

   Background and History: CCSU began using OAP when it was first released and our pricing reflected an introductory offer of $3,000/year for three years and then the price was expected to double to $6,000/year. Carl Lovitt, the Provost at that time, had agreed to cover the expense. In 2018 the CSCU System informed us that they would provide OAP to all institutions going forward. In 2020, the System

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Office canceled the contract with OAP/Watermark and CCSU reached out to Watermark to re-engage as a single institution. At this time, we learned that they had shifted their pricing model from project based to enrollment based; the new price quote was $33,000 to $46,000 (Feb 4, 2020, email). Fast forward to November 13, 2020 (after the start of the pandemic) and Watermark had reduced their price for OAP to something more reasonable, the new 5-year contract proposal was for $7,000/year with a 5% annual increase.

In Fall 2020, the Davis Educational Foundation awarded CCSU a $150,000 grant to improve the assessment of general education. The Foundation has agreed to cover the expenses associated with OAP for calendar years 2021, 2022, and 2023 (the last year of the grant). That leaves two more years to cover before the contract expires. Specifically, we are expected to pay Watermark $8,103.38 in October 2023 and $8,508.35 in October 2024 to continue using OAP. While $8,100 this year and $8,500 next year is not a lot of money, it is 25% of the OIRA budget, a figure that cannot absorbed.

2. **What is the benefit of implementing or detriment of not implementing, as it relates to recruitment and/or retention?**
The benefit of continuing with this software is that it makes the assessment of general education much more efficient and effective, not only for OIRA but for faculty as well. Assessment of general education learning outcomes is not only the right thing to do for our students, ensuring they are learning what we expect them to learn, but it is also required by NECHE and by the CSCU System Office. Failure to comply with NECHE Standards could result in less than positive news, making it harder to portray Central as a responsible institution dedicated to providing a quality education.

Currently, the assessment model evaluates freshmen and senior level work. If we can demonstrate that senior level students consistently out-preform freshmen, that could be used in marketing campaigns – sort of a value-added approach in recruiting students. Additionally, employers have communicated their interests in hiring well educated students. There are numerous articles (Indeed.com, Payscale.com, etc.) about employers needing college graduates who can think critically, communicate effectively, and have quantitative reasoning skills – all of which are included in the general education program. Assessing general education is one way that CCSU can demonstrate the quality of a Central education.

3. **Describe how the impact/success will be measured as related to recruitment and/or retention. What is the measurement baseline today? If the request is approved, how would the measure change in 3 years?**
The impact of assessing general education learning outcomes should result in improved student success. However, this is a partnership between OIRA and faculty. In addition to hosting the general education assessment retreats where OAP is a critical component, OIRA must communicate the results to faculty (this is in progress). Faculty then need to consider the results and make appropriate

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adjustments to their curriculum, assignment, or teaching style with a long-term goal of students demonstrating improved proficiency of the respective learning outcome. The expectation is for senior-level scores to increase over time.

4. **Does this program/request overlap or have interrelationships and/or interdependencies with other programs, departments or divisions? If so, please describe. Include feedback from these entities verifying support for the request.**

   Yes, see response to question 3. In addition, the Faculty Senate approved this approach to general education assessment in November 2017.

5. **For the index/indices to be funded, specify whether the funding is for discretionary personal services/operating expenses (DPS/OE) or personal services (PS) (i.e., salaried employees). Identify current base budget (prior to other transfers) level(s) of funding (for DPS/OE or PS) and calculate the percentage of the proposed increase (e.g., a request for $10,000 to a DPS/OE index funded at $100,000 would be a 10% increase).**

   Funding for OAP will be in the form of operating expenses. OIRA's current budget (PLAN01) is $33,489; the software is $8,100 for FY2024 and $8,500 for FY2025 and represents about 25 percent of our current operating budget.

6. **If this request cannot be funded through reallocation, explain why. If this request can be partially or completely funded through reallocation, provide the rationale.**

   OIRA has a very small budget that was never designed to fund these larger university projects.

7. **Describe any additional office or special technology requirements, if this initiative is approved?**

   None

8. **Describe connection(s) with the strategic plan, specifying which key activity or activities does it support or connection to NECHE accreditation, identifying applicable standards.**

   Assessment of general education is one of the metrics included in the Strategic Plan, specifically Goal 1, Metric 3: Assessment of all General Education Learning Objectives and is required by NECHE, Standard 4.14 and 4.15

9. **Does this request improve a health and safety issue (e.g., fire code, counseling)? If so, please describe how.**

   No