SMC Website Redesign Project

At its meeting on September 14, 2005, DPAC unanimously voted to forward the following recommendation to the Interim Superintendent/President:

1.   The College should acknowledge its internet website as the primary means of distributing information for our current and prospective students, the faculty and staff, and the community and that the College should devote appropriate human and financial resources toward that end.

2.   The Administration should designate an individual to direct the college website, including its design, site navigation, editorial content, and on-going maintenance.

3.   The Administration should establish a Website Steering Committee, comprising representatives of college constituency groups, webpage authors, and users, to advise the administration and the individual directing the website.

4.   The individual directing the website, with the advice of the Website Steering Committee, shall implement the recommendations of the Website Working Group and take such additional measures as may be necessary to improve the college's website appearance and functionality.

     DPAC agreed to table until the next meeting the rest of the recommendation which includes a phasing-in plan, resources, timeline and outcome, with the understanding that some of the recommendations may be revised.

SMC website redesign project approach proposal:

Based on the website workgroup recommendation as the guiding principle, the Technology Planning Committee proposed the following phased-approach and initial phase project plan:

Phase I:

Prior to the implementation of the project, the following resource and organization need to be designated:

1. Identify a Project Director
2. Form SMC Website Steering/Advisory Committee
3. Define reporting structure of the Project Director and the Steering Committee

Goal: Based on the 1/1/06 timeline set by the DPAC committee, the following tasks can be accomplished as a prototype for the SMC website re-design project:

A. Change the "feel and look" of the current top level navigation pages by using template:

http://www.smc.edu/

http://www.smc.edu/about.html
http://www.smc.edu/academic_programs.html
http://www.smc.edu/admissions/
http://www.smc.edu/administration.html
http://www.smc.edu/bookstore/
http://www.smc.edu/campusmap/
http://www.smc.edu/contact_us.html
http://www.smc.edu/employment.html
http://www.smc.edu/directory/
http://www.smc.edu/distanceed/
http://www.smc.edu/events/
http://www.smc.edu/financialaid/
http://www.smc.edu/international/
http://www.smc.edu/schedules/
http://www.smc.edu/supporting_smc.html
http://www.smc.edu/workforcedevelopment/

B. Define and create the following new web pages—Phase I

http://www.smc.edu/campuses/
http://www.smc.edu/current_students/
http://www.smc.edu/faculty_staff/
http://www.smc.edu/prospective_students/
http://www.smc.edu/sitemap/
http://www.smc.edu/visitors_neighbors/

C. Initiate "RFI" process to invite High Ed Web design specialty companies to propose their approaches and solutions based on the specifications (website workgroup recommendation).

Resources:

Project Director .5 FTE
Steering Committee members 10% each – FTE 1
IT In-house web design, web coordinator, and other network support FTE - 1
Functional area user total FTE - 1 (support to the Steering Committee)

Timeline:

ASAP—
        Website Project Director designated and Staff assigned (Design, Navigation, Editorial)

September 6—
        Website Steering Committee named

September 12—
            Website Steering Committee meets with Project Director and Staff
        Perform detail technical revisions and new navigation design
        Perform RFI and evaluate feasibility

November 15—
        Final Usability Testing

Completion of all vendor interviews/presentations

December 5 —
Website Steering Committee gives final approval to proposed changes.
Website Steering Committee finalizes preliminary evaluation result of RFI

December 14 —
DPAC reviews proposed changes and propose, if appropriate, prototype go-live date.
Project Director reports preliminary RFI findings.

January 1—
Website prototype complete

January 16 —
Project Director reports project plan for Phase II to DPAC

Outcome:

A prototype of the new SMC main page and some important navigation improvement on the first 2-3 level of website will be presented. The result will equates to approximately 5% of the entire SMC site based on the workgroup recommendation. However, the functional enhancement will serve as "proof-of-concept" prototype.

In parallel to the prototype effort, a RFI process will be initiated, which include all SMC design resources to make adjustment based on the experiences vendors shared in the RFI process. The Project Director and Steering Committee will prepare RFQ document and phase II project plan based on the information received in the process.

Based on the Phase I effort and advice from the Steering Committee, the Project Director will draft phase II project plan and report to the DPAC.

Pros and Cons:

- SMC main webpage will get quick change of the first 2-3 level navigation pages which will provide a more modern and professional look.
- There is negative impact to the audiences if we foresee incremental navigational changes of main SMC pages by the "quick win" approach. DPAC will recommend the feasibility of taking the prototype design to production at the end of phase I.
- Although the scope of phase I does not involve any content changes, there are challenges for sub-sites that are designed and/or hosted by outsourcing.

- The implementation team and Steering Committee will be provided some time to evaluate the feasibility of outsourcing, or partially outsourcing the project via the RFI process.
- The recommendation of detail implementation plan and cost estimate would be realistic after the phase I effort.

Conclusion:

Most of the SMC website problems were caused by the lacking of an organization to support a set of pre-defined structure. The phase I of the project intents to define the organization and prove the concept of the new design approach. Phase II intents to implement the project in full scale and define the maintenance structure. Phase III is the final phase and on-going phase of implementing all pre-defined procedures and provide the training that is needed for maintaining an efficient website in the long run.

The Website workgroup recommendation cannot be fulfilled unless this is campus-wide project, which requires all the initial resources support from the District level and a long term commitment from all areas of institution to follow the defined standards and procedures to maintain an efficient and effective website.