



The State Bar *of California*

OPEN SESSION AGENDA ITEM 702 NOVEMBER 2019

DATE: November 14, 2019

TO: Members, Board of Trustees

FROM: Amy Nuñez, Director of Admissions
Eduardo Frias, Interim Director of Information Technology

SUBJECT: Admissions Information Management System – Budget Amendment and Contract Approval

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This item requests a budget amendment to allocate \$725,000 to stabilize and enhance the Admissions Information Management System (AIMS), which will be paid from the Admissions Fund in fiscal years 2019 and 2020. This item further requests approval of a contract in that amount with Slalom Consulting, the original system implementer, to perform the work. The Finance Committee met to discuss this item on November 6, 2019, and recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the request.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Admissions is responsible for the planning, administration and grading of the California Bar Examination, First Year Law Students' Examination and Legal Specialization Examination; for the evaluation of moral character for applicants for admission to the practice of law; and for the accreditation and registration of non-ABA accredited California law schools.

In 2017 the State Bar initiated a digital transformation of its Office of Admissions that sought to move the many manual and electronic components of the office into a single, comprehensive system, designated the Admissions Information Management System (AIMS). Through a competitive Request for Proposal process that concluded in late 2017, the Salesforce platform

and a system integrator (Slalom) were selected for the project. The project kicked off in March 2018, and AIMS went live on February 28, 2019.

The AIMS project budget from kickoff to go-live was \$3.26 million, comprised of: \$2.63 million for development and implementation; \$0.32 million for first year software licenses; and \$0.31 million for Interfund charges.

DISCUSSION

AIMS is a cloud-based system on the Salesforce platform, which allows users, consisting primarily of law school students and attorneys seeking licensing to practice law in California, to have a “one-stop shop” in the AIMS portal to complete a variety of functions. By accessing AIMS, applicants are able to conduct a variety of operations: register as a law student or attorney licensed in another jurisdiction; apply for a moral character determination; apply for any of the exams offered by the Office of Admissions; apply for testing accommodations; access exam results; and, for unsuccessful examinees, the system offers a method for accessing their exam booklets. Many of these functions previously required paper transmission and manual processing, which was inefficient due to the length of time required to mail signed applications or forms to the office or to send requested documents to applicants. Also, the Office of Admissions previously relied on a third-party vendor to create each exam registration, which required constant data migration and merging with the old system.

From a technology standpoint, AIMS has greatly advanced the state of the information systems at the State Bar. The use of Salesforce, a completely cloud-based application, allows the State Bar to leverage reliable and scalable technology, proven by thousands of public and private organizations. From an internal perspective, AIMS creates a foundation of systems and knowledge that the State Bar will be able to leverage for future initiatives to modernize its operations.

At the same time, while actively using the system for the first six months following implementation, Admissions staff members have identified a number of issues related to system functionality – both potential productivity enhancements that were not part of the original project scope, and system defects that were not identified prior to implementation.

In August and September 2019 the Offices of Admissions and Information Technology conducted a comprehensive review of all the improvement opportunities and issues that had been identified. This list was prioritized and analyzed for effort/cost and value to the business, with the objective of accurately defining the scope of a “Phase 2” enhancement and stabilization project. Slalom Consulting, the original system implementer, was also engaged to participate in this effort. The review ultimately identified 47 items to be addressed, as follows:

27 items were identified related to functionality, i.e., productivity enhancements or additional requirements that were not included with the original 673 distinct functional requirements around which the system was designed.

13 items were identified related to technical defects that were not identified during the User Acceptance Testing phase of the original implementation.

7 items were identified related to the migration and/or integration of data from the legacy AS400 system (critical to system operation as AIMS relies on many other automated data sources and systems).

An 18-week plan to address these items (the aforementioned “Phase 2”) has been developed, which includes five weeks of comprehensive end-to-end testing and data validation. Slalom will perform the work, supported by State Bar I.T. resources. Slalom will provide overall project management, including a full-time project manager and staff dedicated to testing and quality assurance. The Phase 2 project will include improved testing practices, based on lessons learned during the first development phase. For example, User Acceptance Testing will be guided by Slalom team members, rather than self-guided by staff, and will include more comprehensive end-to-end testing. In recognition of its partnership with the State Bar in developing AIMS, Slalom has discounted its fee for the Phase 2 project by approximately 15 percent.

Upon completion of this project, it is expected that subsequent enhancements and resolution of technical issues will be handled by Office of Information Technology resources as part of its regular application maintenance and support function.

State Bar staff and senior management appreciate that this project represents a significant and unanticipated investment of financial and human resources. We have taken a close look at the factors that have necessitated a Phase 2 for AIMS, and at the lessons they provide for future implementations of major systems. Three significant factors/lessons have emerged:

First, the migration and validation of massive amounts of data from the legacy AS400 system, while anticipated to be complex, was much more difficult than anticipated. Lessons learned from this effort will become mitigation strategies as we transition other major applications from the AS400 to new technologies.

Second, due to the complexities of data migration from the AS400, the User Acceptance Testing of some functionality with migrated data was insufficient, and did not identify technical defects that would otherwise have come to light at the time. In particular, User Acceptance Testing was sometimes too siloed by business function, with insufficient end-to-end testing using full and finalized data sets. AIMS Phase 2 will employ a more focused and guided User Acceptance Testing process, as noted above; this lesson is already being applied to the Enterprise Resource Planning project that is currently in progress, and will be taken into account in future projects.

Third, the State Bar has recently created a new Project Management Office (PMO) within its office of Information Technology. Project management responsibility for Bar-wide projects, including large I.T. projects, has resided primarily with the Office of Research & Institutional Accountability (ORIA), and many significant projects and initiatives have benefited from dedicated project management resources since ORIA was formed four years ago. At the same time, lessons learned through several large-scale I.T. system implementations in the last few

years include the fact that large-scale technical projects will benefit from having dedicated *technical* project management resources provided by the State Bar. I.T. project management is its own specialty within the I.T. industry. A restructuring of the State Bar's Office of Information Technology is underway, including new senior leadership; the new I.T. PMO is one part this restructuring. A new internal office dedicated exclusively to technical project management will contribute to future successful system implementations.

FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT

This budget amendment would allocate \$725,000 from the Admissions Fund, with the expense straddling fiscal years 2019 and 2020 based on the timeline of the project. As of September 20, 2019, the Admissions Fund has a projected 2019 year-end reserve balance of \$8,026,482. After this allocation the reserve balance is projected to be \$7,301,482, representing a reserve level of 33 percent, which exceeds the Board's Reserve Policy requiring a minimum of 17 percent.

RULE AMENDMENTS

None

BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY MANUAL AMENDMENTS

None

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal: 2. Ensure a timely, fair, and appropriately resourced admissions, discipline, and regulatory system for the more than 250,000 lawyers licensed in California.

Objective: I. For greater transparency, accountability, efficiency, and access, develop and deploy a new case management system for the Office of Admissions by June 30, 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves a budget amendment to allocate \$725,000 from the Admissions Fund to stabilize and enhance the Admissions Information Management System, which will be paid in fiscal years 2019 and 2020, as described herein; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves a contract with Slalom Consulting for \$725,000 to perform the work, as described herein.

ATTACHMENT(S) LIST

None