

May 30, 2008

To whom it may concern,

I am currently in transition from a position as Senior Policy Analyst at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Organization (SHEEO) to Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Given that transition, my letter of support is absent a letterhead and I'd ask that you'd please accept my transmittal to Pacific Crest via email as evidence of my signature. I have fifteen years of experience in both state government and public higher education and have experienced, first-hand, the challenges organizations face in measuring and analyzing performance. I'm also keenly aware of the current, diverse pressures on higher education to demonstrate performance. Therefore, I would like to lend my enthusiastic support for the Results Measurement System (RMS) project.

The RMS has a wide-array of possible applications, but I'd like to speak to two aspects of the proposed system that pose a significant contribution regardless of application or perspective. The first speaks to the "hurdle" often encountered in the development and implementation of performance measures. It has been my experience that any measurement tool that is not "intuitive" or easy to use will almost certainly fail. I've personally witnessed software systems such as TrackDat or home-grown paper driven systems impede implementation simply because of challenges in functionality. The RMS exists in a visual, web based, and easy to use technological environment that would clearly facilitate wide spread implementation within the context of well developed performance measures. The second aspect is the ability to test measurement data for validity and reliability and perform strong, aggregate analysis. Perhaps the biggest challenge, for higher education in particular, is in the ability to take diverse and decentralized performance measurements within the organization and actively use that information in an analytic, quality improvement approach. As individuals and departments invest enormous human capital in their efforts to measure performance it's rare for an organization to be able to systematically document and analyze performance. RMS would provide the opportunity to meet demands for validity and reliability and more importantly demands for systematic analysis of organizational performance. In an era of increased attention to the performance of higher education institutions (e.g. the Spellings Commission Report, the Voluntary System of Accountability) this is perhaps one of the most valuable aspects of the RMS project.

As a "soon to be" Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness in a large research university (with a medical campus) I could envision multiple applications of RMS and would actively pursue such an opportunity. I believe the initial value, for my particular institution and a project that would demonstrate "proof of concept", would be in implementing measures of institutional effectiveness

related to strategic planning as well as those required by the State's council for higher education. The ability to allow a variety of campus constituents to engage in performance measurement in these areas, first, would build important buy-in, not only for such a tool, but engage people in conversations about the meaning (analysis) of the measures versus the often unenviable task of simply collecting the data.

I am extremely pleased that Pacific Crest is embarking on this endeavor. Pacific Crest as an organization has reached a level of maturity such that this project, in an area clearly within their expertise, would be a guaranteed success and would provide a major contribution for an enormous gap in higher education. I've been fortunate in the last five years to not only take advantage of their professional consulting support, but also the wisdom, guidance, and enthusiasm of their President, Daniel Apple. The vision, tenacity, and deep devotion to education that Dan brings to Pacific Crest are reflected in the envisioned RMS project.

Beginning June 10th I can be reached at:

Virginia Commonwealth University
Ginter House, Room 305
901 West Franklin Street
PO Box 842527
Richmond, VA 23284-2527
Phone: 804-828-6683
Email: kparmley@vcu.edu

In the interim I can be reached at:

Kelli.Parmley@gmail.com
845-380-5992

Sincerely,

Kelli Parmley
Assistant Vice Provost for The Center for Institutional Effectiveness