



June 3, 2008

SBIR Grant – Phase I Letter of Support

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to write in support of Pacific Crest's application for a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant. Pacific Crest's proposed project addresses a critical need in Higher Education for an efficient and manageable system to measure the performance and/or learning outcomes of our educational processes. Such an integrated system, developed by an experienced software developer like Pacific Crest, would enable higher education institutions to be more intentional in measuring outcomes and less reliant on in-house or fragmented systems. Currently, without such a system, most institutions are essentially "re-inventing the wheel" in our approaches to measurement and assessment.

I have participated in some conversations with Pacific Crest about this proposed system. I was impressed with their breadth of understanding of the complexity of tracking performance while also linking measurement to existing standards and expectations of our accrediting and certification organizations. Their proposed system appears to have the flexibility to be adaptable to a variety of performance measurement needs within Higher Education.

At Marywood University, we are particularly interested in this system as a potential solution to our ongoing need for outcome measures for our pre-service education students linked to the standards and requirements of NCATE and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). A data and document management system like this would provide the platform we need to integrate test scores, work samples, student teaching evaluations, student self reflection, and NCATE and PDE standards in one easily managed resource.

Our institutional management and information system is an in-house, custom programmed legacy system. It would take years to develop a comprehensive measurement and assessment system, assuming that we had the expertise to do it and that it could be placed on the institutional list of priority programming needs. A commercially developed system would solve this problem for us.

We have been working with Pacific Crest for almost two years and have developed a strong appreciation for the sound educational principles which are the foundation of their

work. Their philosophical approach to teaching and learning is consonant with the active learning and Universal Design for Learning pedagogy that we, at Marywood, are developing in our pre-service education programs and in our faculty development activities. I believe that Pacific Crest, and the experienced educators working with them, have the knowledge and skills to make effective use of an SBIR phase I grant. The success of this project will have a lasting impact on the quality of performance measurement in Higher Education and, by extension, significantly enhance the educational experience and preparation of students in our institutions.

If you would like more information or have any questions, you can contact me at 570-348-6230 or via e-mail at maf@marywood.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Anne Fedrick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Anne Fedrick, PhD
Dean,
Reap College of Education and Human Development