6-3: Administrative Software

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I. PURPOSE

This policy defines College standards for administrative computer software.

II. GENERAL

A. Preference for vendor-supplied computer programs.

The College will use vendor-developed programs, in unmodified state, whenever this approach reasonably meets the operational need. Purchased programs that meet significant operational needs of the College must include a maintenance agreement that provides for the future technical soundness and currency of the software. Specific written approval by the Director of Computing and Telecommunications, who signs all software contracts, is required before computer software is purchased. The Office of Computing and Telecommunications should be involved early in discussions of any new administrative software.

B. Banner is the College standard.

Systems and Computer Technology (SCT) is the College's current primary vendor of administrative systems. The College operates several major Banner systems, including General, Student, Finance, Alumni, Human Resources, and Financial Aid. All Banner products use Oracle Corporation's relational database management system. Additional software products purchased from vendors will be compatible with this SCT/Oracle software environment. In June 1991, the President's Cabinet adopted the following statement of policy regarding the Banner systems. "The official systems and records of the College reside in the software systems generally referred to as 'Banner.' Any PC application that is not supported by the Computer Center is at risk and cannot be inferred to be the official records of the College."

C. Installing major Banner releases.

SCT supplies periodic major releases of the Banner systems. This section describes the procedure for installing these releases. The Computer Center maintains two separate application environments: a production environment, where all the data and programs used by administrative offices reside; and a development environment, which duplicates the production environment except that the associated data are not current. When a major new software version is received, the Computer Center will establish, in consultation with the Administrative Systems Management Team, projected dates for installing the new version in the development environment and in the production environment. Version documentation including Release Notes and a list of local modifications will be provided to departments that own the data effected by the release. Copies of the version documentation including Release Notes will be distributed to the technical staff. The Computer Center will install the new version in the development environment. Any previous College-specific local modifications to the programs will then be applied. Computer Center staff will make reasonable efforts to verify the correct operation of these modifications. Computer Center personnel will verify access for "typical" major system users, as an initial test of the installation. The new version will then be released for general access in the development environment. User departments are responsible for finally verifying operation of the new version and of the local modifications. Problem reports are to be provided to the Computer Center at least ten working days prior to the projected production date, to allow sufficient time to address the problems. Following the verification period, the new version will be placed in the production environment.

D. Site modifications to vendor-supplied software.

Every effort will be made to use vendor-supplied software in its unmodified state. This is because local modifications must be maintained in each subsequent release, creating a significant on-going workload for user departments and for the Computer Center. If vendor-supplied software will not satisfy the College's needs for external reporting, or College operational procedures cannot be modified without significant hardship, then vendor-supplied software will be modified. Such modification will occur in accordance with established administrative computing priorities (see policy on Resource Allocation Priorities for Administrative Computing).

E. Locally developed systems.

All College system needs cannot be met with vendor-supplied software. However, locally developed systems will be compatible with the SCT/Oracle environment. All development work will be undertaken in accordance with established administrative computing priorities.

F. Requests for information/reports.

Every effort will be made to use existing vendor-supplied or locally developed forms and reports to extract needed data from the College database. Users currently have two options for extracting data in other formats:

1. A list of supported tools for developing ad hoc queries and reports is available from the Computer Center. These tools allow users to extract data in a variety of formats.

2. Subject to established administrative computing priorities, the Computer Center will develop and install additional on-line query forms and hard-copy reports. A Report Request Form should be submitted to the Computer Center.