



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

R. Scott Ralls, Ph.D.

President

August 31, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents
Business Officers
Chief Academic Officers
System Administrators

FROM: Dr. Saundra W. Williams, Senior Vice President and Chief
Technology and Workforce Development

SUBJECT: Campus EAI Response

Recently you may have received an e-mail about a grant to implement a portal using Campus EAI or possibly other software solutions with the name of "portal" as part of the communication. System Office believes these communications to be marketing communications that should be examined closely for potentially costly unknowns to your institution. While it is possible to use many on market portal solutions as a communication portal to students, there are several issues that may limit the usefulness of some third party solutions with your Datatel software and may cost you more integration expenses in the long run. First you should know that the System Office only plans to support the Datatel Portal product in the future. System Office has embarked upon a course to execute a consortium purchase of the Datatel Portal product for use by all community colleges in our System. This Datatel Portal product is based on Microsoft SharePoint and will be integrated into the CIS Template. Your institution will receive this integrated Datatel Portal software as a part of a System rollout as we have done in the past. This will provide a portal for your students and staff that is closely integrated with the CIS Template and that will support "Smart Phone" integration in the future. In addition, Datatel is planning additional registration and reporting features that are based on the Datatel portal and Share point. System Office cautions you that for your institution to use these features with a non-Datatel Portal from the CIS Template you will have to develop, train, maintain and support these features locally at your institution.

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Portals by other names than Datatel may not integrate or be cost effective for support by your institution in coming years with technology advances and integration of maintenance points. Not all companies with a “portal” are Datatel Partners. System Office has checked and Campus EAI is not presently a partner of Datatel. With any “portal” other than the Datatel Portal, any interface for the movement of data between a third party portal and the CIS Template based on Datatel’s Portal, may have to be developed and maintained by your local staff and not supported by the System Office. Secondly, your staff will have to be responsible for extensive testing required of each set of CIS Template patches from System Office to ensure that the patches do not break your locally maintained interfaces. This will require your institution to create additional support staff time to maintain a non CIS Template based Datatel Portal solution from a third party.

While the System Office is not advising that your college should stop examining the Campus EAI offering or other third party portal solutions, we believe that your institution must very carefully examine the issues above as part of your decision making in portal selection if you decide to move away from the Datatel Portal based on SharePoint and integrated into the CIS template.

System Office has secured funding for a consortium purchase of Datatel’s Portal and is proceeding. Please expect to hear more about plans and how those plans involve your institution in the coming months.

Should you have questions, please address them directly to Bruce Humphrey, Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer at humphreyb@nccommunitycolleges.edu or 919.807.6991.

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