



President's Report

to the
Board of Trustees

March 6, 2023

 **Northeastern**
ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACTION ITEMS

1. Consideration and Approval of Purchases \$100,000 or Greater: Merchant Services and Banking Services.....	2
2. Consideration and Approval of Purchases \$100,000 or Greater: Sole Source Website Development Project.....	3
3. Consideration and Approval of RFP for Development of the Vacant Parcels Adjacent to the El Centro Location.....	5

II. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Purchases of at Least \$50,000 but less than \$100,000.....	6
2. Consideration of Recommended Revisions to Board Regulations – Section V. Administrative Affairs.....	7

ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERTION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED PURCHASES OF \$100,000 OR GREATER: MERCHANT SERVICES AND BANKING SERVICES

Background

Northeastern Illinois University contracts with a firm to provide banking and merchant services. The current banking services contract expires on October 12, 2023 and the merchant services contract expired on February 10, 2023 with no renewal options available. Northeastern Illinois University issued a Request for Proposal solicitation on October 8, 2022 for Banking Services and Merchant Services. Three banking services proposals and four merchant services proposals were received before the November 2, 2022 deadline.

Scope

Banking services enable the University to conduct its day-to-day business operations related to managing its cash flow and checking account balances. This includes activity in accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll.

Merchant services include payment processing for credit card and debit card payment services including point-of-sale transactions, phone and internet transactions, and electronic check conversion. Merchant services are required for daily operations to enable the University's finance, student information system, financial aid, human resources, payroll, and enterprise portal to accept electronic financial transactions. On average, the University processes over 29,000 credit card payment transactions valued over \$22.5 million annually.

Both Banking and Merchant Services include monthly merchant statements, data security and industry compliance, risk monitoring, dispute and fraud losses process, payment gateway to link to the University website, authentication and verification of transactions, comprehensive equipment and software (chip card reader, point-of-sale equipment), adjustments and chargeback processing, web-based reporting tools for up-to-date daily transaction information, and terminal support 24/7.

A committee evaluated the proposals using a rubric that helped to summarize the vendor's strengths and weaknesses. JPMorgan Chase was the only vendor that surpassed the minimum scores of the rubric for both banking and merchant services.

RECOMMENDED SERVICE PROVIDER

JP Morgan Chase Bank, NA (JPMC)
10 S. Dearborn, Floor 36
Chicago, IL 60603

Cost

Banking Services: Not to exceed \$70,000/year
Merchant Services: Not to exceed \$400,000/year

Source of Funds

Income Fund

Recommended Action

I request that the Board approve contracting with JP Morgan Chase, NA for both banking services and merchant services. The initial period for each contract will be five-years. Each contract for services will have options for renewal of up to five-years.

ACTION ITEM I. B. CONSIDERTION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED PURCHASES OF \$100,000 OR GREATER: SOLE SOURCE WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Background

Research has shown that students and families rely on university websites as their one-stop shop to learn about a school. A university must ensure the content on its website is up to date and allows students to get the information they need, and see themselves becoming a student. NEIU's website was last overhauled in 2013. Over the years, the website has blended internal and external audiences and added extraneous content, and in turn, the site has become bloated and navigation cumbersome.

Since the website is NEIU's primary marketing tool, the University has decided to engage an external vendor as a partner in improving the site. The goal of the NEIU website improvement project is to:

- Positively impact NEIU'S ongoing recruitment efforts for undergraduate, transfer, graduate and international students;
- Improve the student, family, alumni and other stakeholders' user experience;
- Provide a cohesive highlight of the NEIU brand identity;
- Improve site performance;
- Deliver better SEO results;
- Allow the University to stay current on higher education best practices and trends.

Scope of Services

NEIU will engage an external vendor for the following deliverables to be divided into two phases.

Phase 1 (near completion):

- Research was conducted regarding NEIU's online presence.
- Strategy and Planning (UX, Sitemap, and Wireframe). Plans were made for an information architecture that prioritizes content for multiple stakeholders, including prospective students, parents and influencers. The goal in this phase is to develop a plan to improve the new site's usability, accessibility and the user's overall experience.
- Design and Layout. A new design will be developed using best practices to visually guide users through a new interface.

Phase 2 (to be implemented):

- Content and Assembly. The University will partner with a website vendor to consolidate and develop new content that is focused on attracting prospective students.
- Development. The new website will be built on Drupal CMS which will interface with other University systems and functions.
- Testing and Website Launch. The vendor will test all functions and launch the updated website.
- Training and Maintenance. Training and maintenance will require developing policies and procedures to successfully maintain content by in-house staff.
- Technical support and issue resolution.

Vendor Selection

In April 2022, the University conducted a request for quotes for the Phase 1 work to complete the website revamp. Two firms submitted quotes: Carnegie Dartlet, LLC. and M. Harris and Company. Carnegie, which was the lowest cost vendor, was selected due to their familiarity with NEIU and their comprehensive preliminary services, including technical assessment, content strategy, and persona discovery. Carnegie's quote was thorough and addressed the entire website project.

ACTION ITEM I. B. CONSIDERTION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED PURCHASES OF \$100,000 OR GREATER: SOLE SOURCE WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Carnegie is completing the work for Phase 1, as NEIU has already paid for the requested services. For the website to be fully functional, the completion of Phase 2 services is required, which will involve development and implementation, resulting in a finished website project.

Carnegie Dartlet is the recommended vendor to develop and implement Phase 2 of NEIU's new website. Carnegie has a high level of experience in website development technologies, and they are a premier firm well-versed in higher education website and marketing best practices.

RECOMMENDED VENDOR

Carnegie Dartlet, LLC
210 Littleton Rd., Suite 100
Westford, MA 01886

Cost

Not to exceed \$214,000.00

Source of Funds

Strategic Planning Development Fund (SPDF)

Recommended Action

I request that the Board approve the expenditure for implementation of Phase 2 of the University's new website with vendor support from Carnegie Dartlet, LLC. for a cost not-to-exceed \$214,000.00.

**ACTION ITEM I. C.: CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF RFP RELATED TO DEVELOPMENT
OF THE VACANT PARCELS ADJACENT TO THE EL CENTRO LOCATION**

Item has been withdrawn.

INFORMATION ITEM II. A.: PURCHASES OF AT LEAST \$50,000 BUT LESS THAN \$100,000

Board of Trustees' Regulations require that the President report to the Board purchases of at least \$50,000 but less than \$100,000 other than those exempt from Board approval (e.g. utilities). The following lists those purchases since the last Board meeting on November 17, 2022.

VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	PURCHASE ORDER AMOUNT
Bob Carter Companies, LLC. (Non-BEP)	Campaign Study	\$99,000.00
Gabe's Installation Services (BEP)*	Flooring Project for Police Department	\$60,460.00
Davis & Campbell (Non-BEP)	Legal & litigation services for collective bargaining matters	\$90,000.00

*Gabe's Installation BEP- Hispanic Male

INFORMATION ITEM II. B.: CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDED REVISION TO BOARD REGULATIONS – SECTION V. ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS, B. PURCHASES, 1. APPROVAL, a., AND 2. REPORTS (FIRST READING)

Background

Section V. of Northeastern Illinois University's Board Regulations has been in place since April 7, 1998. Prior to formal adoption, these regulations were followed by the Board of Governors of the State of Illinois until January 1, 1996, when, under 110 ILCS 680 Northeastern Illinois University Law, all such rules and regulations became the rules and regulations of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University.

Since 1996, all other Illinois public universities have changed the monetary thresholds by which board approval is required for procurement. Northeastern Illinois University is the last remaining public university to abide by the threshold amounts carried over from the Regulations of the former Board of Governors.

<u>University</u>	<u>Threshold for Board Approval</u>
CSU	250,000
EIU	250,000
GSU	250,000
ISU	500,000
NEIU	100,000 (emphasis added)
NIU	250,000
SIU	1,000,000
WIU	500,000
U of I (see detail below)*	

*From University of Illinois Procedures and Rules, Board of Trustees Schedule and Approval Thresholds, Approval Thresholds:

The following purchase transactions require prior approval by the Board of Trustees:

- Contracts for professional services requiring payment by the University of Illinois System in one fiscal year: \$1,000,000 or more
- Purchases of supplies, equipment and non-professional services requiring payment by the U of I System in one fiscal year: \$1,000,000 or more
- Individual capital project budgets: \$5,000,000 or more
- Contracts for professional services related to capital projects requiring payment by the U of I System: \$1,000,000 or more
- Construction contracts requiring payment by the U of I System: \$2,500,000 or more

Change orders related to medical center operations that exceed 25% of the original Board approved contract or purchase agreement, and change orders that are not related to the medical center operations that exceed 5% of the original Board approved contract for construction or professional services or original Board approved purchase agreements for supplies or equipment, will be reported to the Board at its next scheduled meeting but do not require prior authorization of the Board.

Proposed Change

Section V. Administrative Affairs, B. Purchases, 1. Approval would be changed

from:

- a. *All transactions involving the acquisition of real property and purchases of \$100,000 or more (except as specified in paragraph d. below) shall require approval by the Board of Trustees.*

INFORMATION ITEM II. B.: CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDED REVISION TO BOARD REGULATIONS – SECTION V. ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS, B. PURCHASES, 1. APPROVAL, a., AND 2. REPORTS (FIRST READING)

to:

- a. *All transactions involving the acquisition of real property and purchases of **\$250,000** or more (except as specified in paragraph d. below) shall require approval by the Board of Trustees.*

and

Section V. Administrative Affairs, B. Purchases, 2. Reports would be changed

from:

At each regular meeting of the Board, the President shall present a report on purchases of at least \$50,000 but less than \$100,000 (other than purchases listed in paragraph 1. d. above) made since the preceding regular Board meeting.

to:

*At each regular meeting of the Board, the President shall present a report on purchases of at least **\$100,000 but less than \$250,000** (other than purchases listed in paragraph 1. d. above) made since the preceding regular Board meeting.*