Question 1

Can you identify the consulting firm that was hired to develop Appendix A - Assessing the BI/Analytics Landscape?

Answer: Strategic Initiatives, Inc.
12209 Jonathon’s Glen Way
Herndon, VA 20170

Donald Norris
Joan Leonard

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Appendix A – Assessing the BI/Analytics Landscape, is the final report from Strategic Initiatives, Inc., CCC’s IRDB/BIAS consultant. This document is furnished for informational purposes. Vendors, therefore, are not required to conform with suggestions contained in that final report.

Question 2

Will this firm (hired to develop report listed in Appendix A of RFP) also be entitled to provide a competitive response to RFP No. CCC-10-01?

Answer: No, the firm that developed the report “Assessing the BI/Analytics Landscape” will not be entitled to bid on this RFP.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 3 (Two-Part Question)

a. How much of this project will require the winning bidder to be on-site (excluding training and the kick-off meeting)?

Answer: To the extent necessary to ensure successful installation and operation of the BI solution.

b. Can the development and design be done remotely and general communication with in-house staff be done via conference call, online meetings, and/or e-mail?

Answer: Yes, as appropriate.

Question 4

Do you already have a system / solution in mind? If so, what are you considering?

Answer: No, our expectation is that this RFP process serves to help clarify and articulate that.

Question 5

We have come across clients with different interpretations of “performance outcomes”. In addition to the Description (from link provided http://www.commnet.edu/finance/rfp.asp), can you provide us with the expectations of the solution you need from start to finish?

Answer: The phrase “performance outcomes” in the RFP refers to student/education performance. It has nothing at all to do with technical performance of the BIAS.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(Note: More questions were not accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 6

Can you share some information on what the proposed budget is for the entire Project?

Answer: No. Please see Section III., Requirements, in the RFP document which clarifies the scope of this project.

Question 7

What are the possible dates on commencement and completion of project?

Answer: Commencement will be subject to the State of Connecticut contract procurement process. Completion of Phase I is expected to be accomplished within 4 – 6 months of contract award. Phase II to be determined at a later time.

Question 8

Will there be a bidders conference/meeting to discuss and answer questions?

Answer: No. All questions submitted will be answered in this document.

Question 9

Is it an absolute requirement to use the IR Data Mart (IRDB) as the reporting source for the proposed solution, or may the vendor propose a solution that would not incorporate the IRDB database and instead provide i) a separate DW database with an optimized data model, and ii) mappings, extractions, transformations directly from the Banner database.

Answer: It is our intent to use the IRDB as our Phase I data source, which draws data from multiple sources beyond Banner.
Question 10

Is it possible to get a data sample of educational outcome or other data to support the RFP response development process, as well as a meta data of the IRDB as well as any other data sources available for the first phase? We're happy to sign a NDA.

Answer: As part of the RFP evaluation process, finalists will be furnished with a Connecticut Community Colleges data sample. See RFP, Section VII, part 4.

Question 11 (Two-Part Question)

The RFP listed 2 key dates-----August 19, 2009 as a date for questions and that the proposal is due in the System Office Finance Department by Thursday, September 3, 2009...

a. Are these the only dates I need to be aware of?

Answer: Yes, these are the only key dates you need to be aware of at this time.

b. There is no "Intent to Respond" date or anything right?

Answer: Right, there is no Intent to Respond date.

Question 12

Is it a requirement of any responder to have agreed to and signed the State of Connecticut’s Non-Discrimination Policy and associated Executive Orders PRIOR to submitting a response?

Answer: A response to the RFP may be submitted without first having signed the State of Connecticut’s Non-Discrimination Certification, but the signed document will be required prior to any contract award.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 13

Could extensions be granted to give an additional 2 weeks to respond?

Answer: No.

Question 14 (Multi-Part Question)

“Current ad-hoc reporting processes rely on various extracts from our ERP system, loaded into user created MS Access databases. Power-users in the Institutional Research area also use SPSS to create reports against a variety of flat file data sources. As an early step in this BIAS project, and to help meet our most immediate “Achieving the Dream” reporting needs, we have already developed and populated a pilot version of an Institutional Research Data Mart (IRDB); an Oracle database with a star schema design. It is our expectation that the IRDB will serve as the initial data source for this proposed BIAS, expanding later to include other data sources. In addition, we have engaged a Data Warehouse management consultant who helped refine our planning process (See Appendix A).” – RFP

a. What is CCC’s statement on the quality of the data in the IRDB? Is it clean or unclean?

Answer: It is clean.

b. What is CCC’s statement on the quality of the data in general in all the data sources? Is it clean or unclean?

Answer: Phase I data sources are clean; Phase II data sources yet to be determined.

c. If unclean, what does CCC expect from the vendors with regards to data cleansing?

Answer: Not applicable.
d. Is IRDB the only data source for Phase 1 of the BIAS project?

*Answer:* Yes.

e. Will all other data sources be incorporated in Phase 2 of the BIAS project?

*Answer:* Yes, however source data for Phase II has yet to be identified.

f. What will be the role of the Data Warehouse management consultant during the BIAS project?

*Answer:* No role in the procurement process – possible advisory role in the future, if needed.

g. Which organization does the Data Warehouse management consultant belong to?

*Answer:* See answer to Question 1.

### Question 15 (Multi-Part Question)

“CCC has crafted an extensive data mapping document describing the data sources and structures that it envisions would be housed in an Oracle database with star schemas defining data/dimensions for each component of the desired data mart. This will be useful in the RFP process. However, CCC staff will need to create a functional requirements document that describes the desired reporting, querying, drill down, predictive modeling and analytics capabilities needed as well as future migration requirements – all of which must be included in CCC’s RFP to interested BI/Analytics vendors so that they may respond in kind in their proposals.” – RFP.

a. Is the data mapping document approved / signed off by CCC stakeholders? Can vendors receive a copy of the data mapping document to be used as a reference to prepare the response to the RFP?
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Answer: Yes, it has been approved by the CCC stakeholders. The documentation will be provided during the project initiation phase, once a vendor is selected.

b. Will CCC be responsible for creating the functional requirements document and providing an approved /signed-off copy to the vendor team prior to or during the BIAS project initiation phase?

Answer: This will be developed in partnership with the successful vendor as the BIAS project is implemented, as needed.

c. Is there a metadata dictionary maintained by CCC that encompasses (including a brief description of each data element) all the data in various data sources? Is the metadata dictionary up-to-date and valid? Will CCC provide the metadata dictionary prior to or during the BIAS project initiation phase? Does CCC expect changes to the metadata dictionary during the BIAS project, thereby causing changes to source systems and the data extracted from source systems?

Answer: Yes, the CCC has complete documentation for each data source that is up-to-date and valid. The documentation will be provided during the project initiation phase, once a vendor is selected.

d. Does CCC have complete documentation for each data source? Will CCC provide complete documentation for each data source prior to or during the BIAS project initiation phase?

Answer: Yes, the CCC has complete documentation for each data source. The documentation will be provided during the project initiation phase, once a vendor is selected.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

e. Will CCC provide data files for each of the data sources to be utilized by the extraction module? Or, is the expectation that the respective extraction modules will connect in real-time/directly to the data sources? If real-time/direct connection is the expectation, what are the configurability requirements of the respective extraction modules for each data source?

Answer: For Phase I of the project, there is only one data source, the IRDB. The BIAS will connect to the IRDB, an Oracle database, directly and in real-time.

f. Will CCC provide at least one dedicated business and/or data Subject Matter Expert (SME) during the BIAS project for each data source?

Answer: Yes.

Question 16

Will CCC purchase & provide licensed copies of recommended software during the project? Or, does CCC expect the vendor to purchase & provide licensed copies of the recommended software?

Answer: The expectation is that we will purchase the recommended software/licenses. But, it will ultimately be determined by what the vendor proposes as a solution.

Question 17

Will CCC purchase & provide the recommended hardware to create the development and testing environments during the project? Or, does CCC expect the vendor to purchase & provide the recommended hardware?

Answer: The expectation is that we will purchase the recommended hardware. But, it will ultimately be determined by what the vendor proposes as a solution.
Question 18

Does CCC have a standard for an Extract Transform & Load (ETL) tool to utilize? If yes, which one?

Answer: No, we don’t have a standard for an ETL tool. Also, see answer to Question 15, section e.

Question 19

Will CCC provide a dedicated resource to interface with the CCC IT organization to assist the vendor team to set up and configure the development and testing environments during the BIAS project?

Answer: Yes.

Question 20:

How many CCC personnel will be involved in the technical deliverable review and sign-off process? How many iterations of deliverable review does CCC expect, prior to approving a deliverable?

Answer: Our technical team involved in this project will average around 10 persons. Iterations of deliverable review will be as needed.
Question 21

“The BIAS should have a reasonably low initial cost, supporting the concept of incremental implementation; practical ability to expand over time, adding data sources and user-types, as needed. For costing scenarios, the estimated number of users for each phase of the project is identified in “Section V. Proposal Format, Part B.” The BIAS Project is logically split into two Phases, with the goal being to implement Phase I as soon as possible, while also planning for the important longer-term vision of Phase II:

Project Phase I: The most immediate need is to provide IR Directors with an effective tool to assess student performance. The focus is on higher order analytics, and allowing users greater access to standard and ad hoc reports with simple drill down capabilities, using IRDB as the primary data source.

Project Phase II: Expand the BIAS to include such business functions as Financial Aid, Finance, Human Resources, etc., incorporating additional data sources, as needed. The BIAS must be delivered in a manner that allows the core services to reside in the CCC System Data Center, yet be accessible via clients residing at any of our colleges and via the Internet.” – RFP

Does CCC prefer a Time & Material proposal or a Fixed (Bid) Cost proposal? Is CCC open to a combination approach, i.e. part of the BIAS project as Time & Material and part of it as Fixed (Bid) Cost? In other words, the Technical Architecture Design and Detailed Design phase as Time & Material, the Construction & Unit Testing phase as Fixed (Bid) Cost and the System Integration Testing, User Acceptance Testing, Deployment (Production Cut Over) & Stabilization and Training phases as Fixed (Bid) Cost? Will a vendor be disqualified for proposing a Time & Material proposal for the whole project?

Answer: We have no set model for how these costs are calculated – and no vendor will be penalized for using a particular or combination of pricing formats.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 22

Can you be more specific of the types of reports you are looking to create? For example what types of charts might you want to put on your dashboards?

Answer: Detailed summary and longitudinal reports and charts. With respect to the charts, at a minimum, the kinds of charts Excel, SPSS, and AMOS offer.

Question 23

Are there requirements for certain types of report formatting other than HTML (PDF? XLS? Word? XML?)

Answer: Yes, the formats listed, and others which may evolve in the future.

Question 24

Are there requirements for report scheduling/bursting?

Answer: Yes to report scheduling / no to bursting.

Question 25

Are there requirements for stoplight/goal oriented reporting and proactive alerting?

Answer: This feature will be of value to us; we plan to develop it ourselves with the tools the vendor recommends as we move forward.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(Note: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 26

There’s repeated mention of the Institutional Research Data Mart (IRDB), running on Oracle, that was built as a pilot. Would you consider the IRDB production-ready, meaning the data in it has been through a quality assurance (QA) process and is certified as correct and ready for reporting? If not, would you expect the winning bidder to assume responsibility for driving the QA process and achieving sign-off on the data?

Answer: It is our expectation that the IRDB will be production ready with regard to Quality Assurance around November, 2009.

Question 27

Will CCC staff be responsible for the data modeled and loaded into the IRDB meeting all reporting requirements for Phase I? Or should the vendor include a cost estimate for that effort?

Answer: Yes, CCC staff will be managing this.

Question 28

Will CCC staff be responsible for extending the IRDB to meet reporting requirements for Phase II, such as expanding the system to accommodate the additional subject areas? Or should the bidder include a cost estimate for the data modeling, ETL development and testing effort necessary to prepare the IRDB for Phase II requirements?

Answer: The scope of Phase II is yet to be determined. It is important, though, that the BIAS selected will be scalable to accommodate Phase II needs.
Question 29

Does this bid need to include the cost of any additional hardware (e.g. servers) that will need to be procured for applications/tools to run on?

Answer: See answer to Question 17.

Question 30

Your RFP mentions the use of Excel by the Power Users and our solution intends to leverage Excel 2007 for certain reporting and analytical functionality. Has Excel 2007 been procured for the 60 Power Users expected in Phase I and the 120 Power Users expected in Phase II? If not, does this bid need to include a quote for Excel 2007 licenses?

Answer: Yes, all CCC users have licensed copies of Microsoft Office Professional 2007.

Question 31

Our solution may include the use of SharePoint Server 2007. Does CCC have SharePoint Enterprise CALs (Client Access License) for every expected user of the system?

Answer: Your response should include all required software and licenses to implement your solution.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 32

Page 10 of Appendix A mentions a functional requirements document produced by CCC staff that will help guide the vendors in their responses. Is this document available anywhere?

*Answer:* See Question 1, IMPORTANT NOTE; and answer to Question 15, section b.

Question 33

Do you expect the vendor to develop or migrate any of 530 reports that exist in the current system over to the BIAS?

*Answer:* No, but CCC may need to do so in the future and the successful vendor’s BIAS will need to be able to accommodate this.

Question 34

Is the intent to accomplish all of the requirements with a single tool or application?

*Answer:* Not necessarily.

Question 35

Do you anticipate utilizing a combination of components, from possibly multiple vendors, to complete the solution?

*Answer:* If that best achieves CCC’s objectives.
Question 36

When is the expected date for the completion of the finalized IRDB? If necessary, will modifications to the warehouse be permitted to more closely align with the best practices of the chosen BIAS solution?

*Answer: Phase I IRDB is expected to be production ready by November, 2009. Modifications would be considered.*

Question 37

Can CCC provide an ER diagram of the IRDB?

*Answer: See answer to Question 15, part a.*

Question 38

What are expected data volumes (row count) in largest fact tables?

*Answer: The largest fact table includes approximately 5 million records with an approximate annual growth rate of 10%.*

Question 39

What are the security requirements surrounding access to the data both internally (via WAN) and externally (via internet)?

*Answer: We look to follow best practices in securing our data. The vendor should describe the different security options they can provide and the methodology for each security option.*
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 40

Is there a requirement to incorporate the BIAS solution into a CCC portal or intranet site?

Answer: Yes.

Question 41

Can you provide detail regarding your security requirements? Will the solution require fine or coarse grained security?

Answer: We look to follow best practices in securing our data. The vendor should describe the different security options they can provide and the methodology for each security option.

Question 42

Has your security model been considered in the design of your data warehouse or is the expectation that it will be handled in the BIAS?

Answer: We expect that we will have multiple security layers, with some of the security being handled by the BIAS.

Question 43

What are the requirements for application availability and fault tolerance?

Answer: The solution should be scalable, with high availability options.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(Note: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 44

Are there established SLA’s for QA and Performance?

Answer: Insufficient information to properly answer this question.

Question 45

Does CCC have established BI standards or will you require guidance in developing strategic and technical guidelines that are tailored for your organization?

Answer: No, but we expect the successful vendor to provide guidance to help establish BI standards suitable for our needs.

Question 46

With respect to the above question, will CCC provide detailed report specifications or will you require assistance in gathering and documenting requirements?

Answer: No, and this will not be required of the vendor.

Question 47

What is the complexity and depth of analytics that will be performed by the IR team?

Answer: Everything from a simple frequency distribution to path analysis; including multivariate analysis and predictive modeling. We expect to be able to extract data from the system that will feed SPSS and other analytical software as appropriate.
Bidders Questions & Answers

(NOTE: No more questions were accepted after Thursday, August 13, 2009)

Question 48

Do you require customized training materials or will generic training materials suffice?

Answer: We need training sufficient for the CCC to make optimal use of these tools and services.

Question 49

Is ad – hoc reporting a requirement?

Answer: It is an essential component of this project. See RFP, Section III, Requirements, for a more thorough discussion of CCC’s expectations for this system.