DATE: August 21, 2002

TO: SIS Planning Group

FROM: Linda G. Scott, Director
Student Affairs, Fellowships, and Employment
Graduate Division

RE: SIS Pros and Cons

I surveyed all the Graduate Program Assistants and all of the staff of the Graduate Division with regard to what they liked about SIS and what they would like in an upgraded SIS or a new system altogether. What I heard were lots of positives about SIS. The biggest negative that I heard from departments is their inability to get data when they need it. They would like SIS to work more like a database such as Access where they could select data or be able to pull data out of SIS without having to know Focus.

In general I heard that the staff loves SIS. Most were not specific. Of the ones that were, what they liked in particular were the following:

… It runs consistently well with few "down" times
… The fact that it maintains teaching load data
… It shows enrollments in courses
… All the audit screens - Ex, 137, 139, 320
… Like the paid flags except when it says paid and they are not really paid
… Like being able to look up admission status
… Like being able to see who is enrolled but it is cumbersome at times. If a student is not showing as paid that can be very tricky.
… Like students being able to see their bills, grades, etc.
… Love screen 183, 148, 110, 103, 109, 1G7, 657, 658
… One department liked all of the following screens: 041, 103, 105, 107, 110, 1111, 114, 117, 119, 129, 130, 131, 132, 136, 140, 141, 142, 143, 148, 651, 654, 655, 656, 681, 1C4, 1C7, 1C8, 1F3, 1F4, 1F5, 1D4, 1G7, SP3
… Like the fact that it keeps track of dissertation, thesis, and qualifying exam committees
… Like the fact that we can post degrees and dissertation titles

The biggest drawback about SIS is that you cannot design your own screens or pull data easily. Many programs including the Graduate Division run parallel systems because SIS does not maintain all of the data we need. If we were to improve SIS or purchase a new system we would like to see the following:

… The ability to design screens
… The ability for departments to be able to download data on their students or faculty
… The ability to print transcripts from their desk
… One department said they wanted to be able to print three (3) screens on a letter size piece of paper.
… The request modifying a screen to meet a department's needs takes a lot of time. The hierarchy that it goes through, then to find out that programming time is limited, is very frustrating.
… Want screens that better identify what is in SIS
… Easier and better search capabilities
… Dislike not being able to identify the number of units a student is in after third week.
… It needs to be able to track departmental committees. Pete made an attempt but never got the security issues sorted out.
… Trying to see what financial support a student has is difficult.
… We still have to do refunds for withdrawals by hand. We would like this automated
… We want the system to identify course repeats automatically upon registration
… We would like the system to keep track of the number of quarters a student has been a TA
… The ability to change residency in one place, not two or three
… The ability to count the number of quarters a student has been enrolled and within that count students on official part time status as 1/2 of a quarter.
… Have it show part-time status, filing fee, and leave of absence some where other than on screen 111
… The ability to count GPA for those with double majors or those who begin a second major; ex. student received a degree in Geology and then began a degree in Computer Science. I want the ability to have the GPA of the second degree be calculated automatically instead of by hand each quarter.
… When a student repeats a course I want it noted on the transcript automatically. Right now I have to call the Registrar's Office and some one does this by hand.
… I don't want students to be able to enroll in a course on an S/NC basis unless it is offered that way
… Would like PPS to communicate with SIS
… Want to be able to send out individual letters to students via SIS
… Would like the English Department Lecturers listed in SIS
… Want backdating done differently
… Screen 318; would like 4 or 6 digit field to better identify lender field
… Need to be able to better isolate grads vs undergrads in Financial Aid module more easily
… Ability to name fields, change fields
… Want more audit screens-like address audit
… Want to be able to do timetable tracking
… Want to know why students lapse
… Want to know how much students, owe, why, and why they have a hold; would love for the system to tell me which students are not paid and how much they owe
… Dummy fields we can set up ourselves so that we can track things, like when a letter was sent
… Posting leaves after the quarter begins could be designed better
… Make a student's transcript in the system easier to read; being on some many different screens makes it difficult to review
… Want an audit screen that shows who has made changes to our data
… The ability to do batch changes
… The software that tracks students for SEVIS needs to be interactive
… Have the system send us an e-mail if a student has done something to affect their fellowship
… I would love to enter a fellowship package when the student is admitted and show what the student will receive for the next six years and then have it enter the details on the student's bill.
… If we keep On-Course it needs major modifications. It is not designed for graduate students