

## Justification for Sole Source Purchases or Contracts

This form is to be used for estimated purchases for general commodities and services as provided for in Section 20-20 of the Procurement Code (PA 90-572) and Section 526.2020 of the Procurement Rules of the Chief Procurement Officer for Public Institutions of Higher Education. The exact amounts are posted annually. See: <http://www.procure.stateuniv.state.il.us/bidlimits.html>

Requestor: Theresa M Maynard	Date: 07/08/08	Requisition Number: tmm98577
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Department: Orientation & First-Year Experience	Vendor/Contractor: Policy Center on the First Year of College
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**Sole Source Procurement** – In accordance with the Illinois Procurement Code, a sole source procurement is permissible when a requirement is available from only a single supplier/contractor. A requirement for a particular proprietary item does not justify a sole source procurement if there is more than one potential bidder or offeror authorized to provide that item.

**Proprietary Purchase** – A proprietary product is one that is manufactured and marketed by a person or persons having the exclusive right to manufacturer and sell the product. Marketing is generally controlled by franchises that may include competitive sales at wholesale or retail levels. When it is found that bids may be obtained from different franchises, a competitive selection must be issued unless the estimated purchase for general commodities and services is less than the annually posted small purchase maximum.

This purchase is economically only available from a single source because the

- Compatibility of equipment, accessories, replacement parts or service is a paramount consideration.
- Sole supplier's items are needed for trial use or testing.
- Sole supplier's item is to be procured for commercial resale.
- Public utility service is regulated
- Item or service is copyrighted or patented and is not available except from the holder of the copyright or patent.
- Media is for advertising.
- Procurement is art, entertainment services, or athletic events.
- Procurement is radio and television broadcast rights.
- Education, research, public service, or athletic activities are related to participation in mandated organizations of which the University is a member.
- Other: (provide information below)

### Business Rationale

1. Provide detailed information about why you need to acquire these goods or services:

Foundations of Excellence® is a process that:

- Revitalizes a campus's approach to the first year
- Considers retention in the larger context of first-year excellence
- Extends beyond unit-level assessment to comprehensive assessment
- Focuses on institutional behavior rather than student behavior
- Links academic and student affairs in a collegial process
- Involves Institutional Research/Assessment professionals

In short, Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year® is a comprehensive, guided self-study and improvement process that will enhance Northern's ability to realize our goals for student learning, success, and

persistence. By participating in this systematic self-study under the guidance of the Policy Center, NIU would take a candid look at its strengths and weaknesses and, based on our findings, would develop an action plan leading to needed institutional change and improved measurable student outcomes.

Foundations of Excellence® fits into several recommendations embedded in the Provost's Strategic Plan. In addition, a recommendation in the report of the NIU Task Force on the First-Year Experience is that we "Increase NIU's national reputation for commitment to the first year via participation in the Foundations of Excellence® project" (p. 13). NIU would be part of the fifth cohort to engage in this process.

2. Has your department bought these goods/services in the past?  YES  NO  
If yes, who was the contractor/supplier and was the requirement competitively bid or sole source? What was the last date and price paid for goods/services?

3. Why are the requested goods/services the only one that can satisfy your requirements? What are the unique features of the product or service that are not available in any other product? Provide specific, quantifiable factors/qualifications.

Foundations of Excellence® provides a comprehensive package of goods and services to help institutions assess and develop an action plan to strengthen their first-year experience. Participation in Foundations of Excellence® provides access to nine foundational dimensions that are used as indicators and an aspirational and measurement model for the first year. With measurable indicators on the nine dimensions, NIU will receive a current practices inventory, a faculty survey, and a student survey to assess the level of performance in the first year. Furthermore, NIU will receive a two-year license to use the FoEtec electronic platform for recording data, internal and external communication, and reporting findings. Lastly, The Policy Center sponsors a required two-day summer meeting to prepare each campus to derive maximum benefit from the Foundations of Excellence process. Three complimentary registrations include most meals and all materials.

Foundations of Excellence® was originally developed by the Policy Center on the First Year of College in collaboration with its research partners and over 300 public and private four-year and two-year institutions. The dimensions are the trademarked intellectual property of the Policy Center on the First Year of College. Participating in the Foundations of Excellence® Self-Study can only be made by campuses that have obtained a license to use the various templates, reporting documents, and processes that are designed to facilitate use of the Foundational Dimensions as an aspirational and measurement model.

4. If services, what are the unique qualifications this vendor possesses? Provide specific, measurable factors/qualifications.

Staff members/consultants of the Policy Center are the undisputed international leaders in the field of first-year education.

Dr. John N. Gardner has led an international movement to enhance the first and senior years on campuses across the country and around the world. He is founder and senior fellow of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and distinguished professor emeritus of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina. From 1974 to 1999, Gardner served as executive director of the National Resource Center, and of the nationally acclaimed University 101 program at USC. He is currently the executive director of the Policy Center on the First Year of College located in Brevard, NC and funded by grants from The Atlantic Philanthropies and The Pew Charitable Trusts, and for 2003-2004 from The Lumina Foundation for Education.

Dr. Betsy Barefoot serves as Co-Director for the Policy Center on the First Year of College and Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Brevard College. Dr. Barefoot is directly involved in the development of instruments and strategies to assess the first college year. In addition, she conducts seminars on the first-year experience across the United States and in other countries and assists other colleges and universities in implementing and

evaluating first-year programs. Prior to assuming this position, Dr. Barefoot served for 11 years as Co-Director for Research and Publications in the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina.

Dr. Randy Swing serves as a Senior Fellow of the Policy Center on the First Year of College. He is directly involved in the development of assessment instruments and in the Center's national dissemination of information about assessment methodologies. Dr. Swing holds active memberships in the American Association for Institutional Research, the Southern Association of Institutional Researchers, the Consortium for Assessment and Planning Support, and the American Association for Higher Education. His current work explores assessment methods, instruments, and data analyses – with emphasis on documenting learning outcomes from first-year programs and general education curricula.

Additionally, universities accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools may combine the Foundations of Excellence® process with reaffirmation of reaccreditation focused on the first year.

5. Were alternative goods/services evaluated? If yes, what were they and why were they unacceptable? Please be specific with regard to features, characteristics, requirements, capabilities and compatibility. If no, why were alternatives not evaluated?

No other comparable services exist. This is a "best practice" which has no higher peer in education.

6. What efforts were made to get the best possible price?

Two NIU staff members have conferred in person with Dr. John Gardner of the Policy Center in Chicago in April 2007 and in San Francisco on 2/16/08. We were informed that the \$33,500 fee is a standard, fixed price charged to any participating institution regardless of size or type.

7. Will this purchase obligate the University to this vendor for future purchases, for example maintenance, licensing or continuing need?

YES  NO

8. Why is the price for this purchase considered to be fair and reasonable:

The price for participating in the Foundations of Excellence Self-Study is fair and reasonable because it includes a comprehensive package of goods and services that are designed to help institutions strengthen their first-year experience, which in turn can lead to improved retention rates. The cost of retaining a single full-time NIU student from the first-year through graduation is estimated at \$27,237 (Retention Savings Worksheet, 2003, Noel-Levitz, Inc.), nearly the cost of this project. A ten percent reduction in the first- to second-year drop-out rate is estimated at \$1.9 million. Clearly, any proven strategy that results in retaining first-year students will pay for itself many times over. Included in the price of Foundations of Excellence® are three survey instruments that align with the nine foundational dimensions and a two-year license granting access to the FoEtec electronic platform to record and report data. Also included is access to the Policy Center staff and consultants who are known experts on First-Year Experience initiatives and have worked with many institutions across the country. Participation in the Foundations of Excellence® would provide Northern Illinois University with national recognition (including listing in "The Chronicle of Higher Education") as being an institution devoted to improving the first-year experience and would place Northern prominently among the 117 two- and four-year institutions that have participated since its inception in 2003. At a cost of just over \$10 per first-year freshman entering NIU in fall 2008, participation in this self-study should lead NIU to developing an action plan to improve the first-year experience and to national prominence in the First-Year Experience movement. Additionally, Foundations of Excellence® will lead to the start of a Sophomore Year Experience at NIU

9. Amount to be paid: \$33,500 over a two-year period (\$16,750.00 in FY09, \$16,750.00 in FY10)

Actual  Estimated

10. What will be the financial or other impact to your department/grant/research project if this sole source is not approved and a competitive bid is required?

Project will not occur as this is a sole vendor.

### Term

One Time Purchase

Ongoing Purchase

Sole Source Procurement Begin Date: August 11, 2008      Sole Source Procurement End Date: August 11, 2010

Number of Potential Renewal Options: Additional consultation could be purchased, but we do not anticipate this

### Funding

Select the type of funding to be used:

State Appropriated Funds (02, 03, 04)

Institutional – Revenue Bond (29, 30, 31, 33)

Institutional – Local Funds (41, 45)

Institutional – Sales & Service Activities

Sponsored Projects (44)

State Grant Funds

Federal Grant Funds

Other Grant Funds

Other (provide info)

### Approval

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Submit to:

Procurement Services

Northern Illinois University

Lowden Hall 107

DeKalb IL 60115

For Procurement Services Use Only

Purchase Order Number: 98577