1.   **Title**

Enhancing Major Software Projects

2.   **Policy**

Sec. 1   Policy. The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines and requirements for the Major Software systems decisions and for their inclusion in the Information Systems Improvement Program (ISIP).

Sec. 2   Background. The selection and implementation of major software systems is a costly and complicated endeavor. Critical management decisions and the consequences of those decisions extend well beyond vendor selection and include choices of acquiring/building/outsourcing of software, project management, staffing and organizational structure, managing user expectations, change management, maintenance and support, and resource commitment. As a result, some colleges and universities have often experienced numerous unexpected setbacks and budget overruns when implementing such systems. Because of the costs and attendant risks associated with major software system decisions and implementation and due to the varied experiences and expertise of University of Texas System campus business and information technology leaders, it is both helpful and appropriate to maintain a process where the intent to make major software system decisions are communicated. Best practices can then be shared, consistent quality planning can be utilized, and U. T. System resources can be leveraged to reduce cost and risk.

Sec. 3   ISIP. The ISIP details the U. T. System's long-range plan to enhance information processing and reporting, reduce risk, mitigate unnecessary duplication, and leverage Systemwide revenue sources.

3.1   The inclusion of all planned Major Software system projects into an ISIP would provide the following benefits to the campuses and to the U. T. System:

(a) The Board of Regents, the campuses, and U. T. System leaders would all better understand the magnitude of anticipated resource needs for these projects.

(b) Campuses would be aware of software plans at other institutions and would be better able to collaborate and/or partner with each other.

(c) A peer review would be established with the goal of providing guidance in both the selection and future implementation of the project.

(d) Understanding the Systemwide resource needs would permit alternative funding strategies to emerge (e.g., use of Permanent University Fund debt for system purchases).

(e) Software implementation planning and implementation strategy would be more consistent throughout the U. T. System.

(f) Risks and expectations would be better managed.

(g) Best practices, as they evolve, would be more easily updated and shared.

Sec. 4   Institutional Evaluations. Through a formal information technology (IT) governance process and a strategic information technology planning that is consistent with the institution's long-range plans, each campus should evaluate its projected need for significant new or upgraded enterprise information system software. Once needs are ascertained and alternatives identified, planned potential software acquisitions/development should be vetted and reviewed using the "project cost worksheets" and, optionally, the customized "project sizing tool," which are attached. For significant software decisions not involving the categories automatically defined as major, the project sizing tool will assist each campus in determining whether the planned software acquisition/development or upgrade is defined as "major."

Sec. 5   Major Projects. Major Software acquisitions/development or upgrades should be included on the U. T. System's ISIP and are subject to review and recommendations by the U. T. System Chief Information Officer (CIO). Projects must be reviewed and included on the ISIP before contracts are negotiated or signed or development commences.

Sec. 6   Contract Process. The contract process for securing software and/or consulting services remains unchanged by this policy and final approval of an institution's major software projects continues to rest with the campus president and chief business officer or other executive officers as defined by the U. T. System institution's IT governance process.

Sec. 7   Planning and Implementation Elements. Planning and implementation of major software acquisitions/development or upgrades should include the following elements:

- a project charter;
- a business case analysis;
- a steering committee and executive sponsor;
- a detailed estimated budget including ongoing maintenance costs;
- a source of funds;
- an estimated implementation schedule;
- a scope statement;
- a risk assessment;
- a project tracking plan with milestone reporting;
- a communication matrix; and
- provisions for ongoing performance reporting.

Projects may be included on the ISIP before all of the above elements are completed, but may not proceed until each item is finalized. Minimally, a project should have an estimated budget and implementation date for inclusion on the ISIP.

Sec. 8   Program Purpose. While the ISIP will require no formal approval by the Board of Regents, it can serve as a communication tool to help the U. T. System and all institutions better understand the planned direction of, and investment in, information systems. The ISIP will provide a resource to facilitate collaborations and enhance integrated planning and perhaps implementation among the campuses. It is also anticipated that U. T. System Administration and institutions will periodically report on our plan and progress to the Board.

Sec. 9   Identification of Projects. U. T. System Administration and institutions should identify major software projects. Once it has been determined by the institution that a project qualifies as a major software project, a "Request for Inclusion on The University of Texas System Information System Improvement Program" form (ISIP request form) and the Project Cost Worksheet should be completed for the project.

Sec. 10   Document Submissions. The ISIP request form and the Project Cost Worksheet should be submitted to the U. T. System CIO for review and recommendations before contracts are negotiated or signed or before development commences.

Sec. 11   Responsible Party. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs officially interprets this policy and is responsible for revising it as necessary to meet the changing needs of the U. T. System and statutory requirements.

3.   **Definitions**

Information System Improvement Program (ISIP) - U. T. System's process to enhance information processing and reporting of major software decisions to be funded from campus and Systemwide revenue sources.

Major Software - major software is defined as the following categories of software when initially acquired, developed, and/or outsourced as well as any subsequent significant upgrades. It may also include, at the institution's discretion, any substantial enterprise mission critical software typically identified as major through the use of a project sizing tool, which is customized for each campus. The categories of major software include, but are not limited to:

- Student Information Systems
- Financial Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) including Budgeting, Planning, and Procurement
- Human Resources ERP
- Development
- Library
- Course Management
- Grants Management
- Building Security/Access
- Housing/Dormitory
- Imaging
- Medical Records
- Clinical Tracking
- Billing
- Research Administration (e.g., time and effort, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Institutional Review Board, Research Conflict of Interest, etc.)

Project Charter - the Project Charter provides information used to formally approve and initiate activities for delivery of the project. The charter document typically includes a project description, statement of purpose, business objective(s), scope, major milestones, key assumptions, delineation of authority and responsibility, project organization, source(s) of funding, and key points of contact.

4.   **Relevant Federal and State Statutes, Policies, and Standards**

Texas Education Code, Chapter 65, Section 65.31, General Powers and Duties

5.   **Relevant System Policies, Procedures, and Forms**

Project Sizing Tool

Request for Inclusion on The University of Texas System Information System Improvement Program

Project Cost Worksheet

6.   **System Administration Office(s) Responsible for Policy**

Office of Business Affairs

7.   **Dates Approved or Amended**

August 18, 2005
July 7, 2010
November 21, 2012

8.   **Contact Information**

Questions or comments about this policy should be directed to:

- bor@utsystem.edu