



California Community Colleges



Reimagine Apply May Task Force Wrap-up PPT

May 15th, 2024

Executive Summary

Reimagine Apply Task Force met virtually on May 15. The Task Force compared the technology considerations for a Commercial Solution and a Homegrown Solution. In this discussion, the Task Force generated group feedback on both solutions, offering detailed insight on the respective benefits and challenges. The group concurred on the potential advantages a commercial solution may provide, and highlighted key items that would need to be considered for a vendor selection. Key points from the discussion include:

- **Vendor Selection and Integration:** The right vendor must be flexible, responsive, and show AI readiness. The new solution should integrate seamlessly with older legacy systems, reducing the burden on colleges through effective connectors and data mapping.
- **Fraud Prevention:** A multi-level fraud strategy is essential and will be included in the vendor requirements. This strategy must align fraud technology with business processes and ensure visibility at both statewide and local levels.
- **Timeline and Implementation:** The timeline for issuing an RFP, forming a Selection Committee, and implementing the solution was reviewed. There were some concerns voiced regarding the timeline and adjustments were made to the roll out dates to avoid overwhelming colleges and IT resources.
- **Support and Resources:** The Task Force emphasized the need for an internal support structure. Additional resources and support funds will be required for effective rollout, considering the impact on local IT staff and the need for phased implementation.

With these insights, the Task Force aligned that there is sufficient information available to use in gathering insights from the relevant associations, organizations, and constituencies. The next steps include collecting feedback from the field, refining the RFP process, and ensuring robust communication with stakeholders before finalizing any decisions.



Session Attendees

Name	Stakeholder Group	Role	College/Organization
Annie Koruga	Student Senate	Region IV Legislative Affairs Director	Ohlone College
Becky McCall	CISO	Associate Vice President of Information Services & Technology	Shasta College
Devin Crosby	CISO	Chief Technology Officer	Yuba College
Elaine Kuo	Institutional Researchers	Supervisor, Institutional Research Planning College Researcher	Foothill College
Erik Cooper	IR	Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research, Visualization, and Analytics	Sierra College
Jane Linder	Tech Center	Director of User Experience, Student Centered Design Lab	Tech Center
Jennifer Coleman	CCC Tech Center	Executive Director	CCC Tech Center
John Hetts, Chair	Chancellor's Office	Task Force Co-Chair / Executive Vice Chancellor for the Office of Innovation, Data, Evidence and Analytics Office	Chancellor's Office
Josh Morgan	PIO	Director Of Marketing & Community Relations	Sierra College
LaTonya Parker	Academic Senate	Professor, Counseling Services	Moreno Valley College
Lynn Neault	Chief Executive Officers	Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Chancellor	Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
Michael Odu	Chief Instructional Officer	Vice President of Instruction	San Diego Miramar College
Michelle Smith	Chancellor's Office	Visiting Assistant Vice Chancellor	Chancellor's Office
Rena Martinez Stluka	Admissions & Records	Director, Admissions and Records	Fullerton College



May Task Force Agenda

Time	Activity
1:00 PM	Welcome
	Session Objectives
	Application Tooling & Discussion
	Tentative Timeline
2:45 PM	Next Steps & Wrap-Up
3:00 PM	END

Application Technology Approach

Discussion Points:

Commercial Solution Considerations

- Acknowledged that if there is an RFP for a commercial solution it will be key to select the right vendor (top factors to assess include: flexibility, responsiveness, and the ability to connect with existing databases, ensure AI readiness, a multi-level fraud strategy).
- The group aligned on the importance of “Future-proof” technology that evolves with changing constituent needs and challenges.
- Ongoing support from the chosen vendor will need to be robust, with an internal support structure to manage the transition and maintain advocacy for the system's needs.
- The Tech Center was asked to weigh in on the idea of a commercial approach. Jane Linder and Jennifer Coleman shared the legacy system certainly has the limitations; they have built Next Gen; commercial might respond better; and the Tech Center is here to serve whatever the system decides.
- Concern about ongoing support - third party vendor that doesn't know our system can't do the support structures that the Tech Center does right now.
- Intention is to have a fair and open process for the selection of a solution.

Commercial vs. Homegrown

Move to a commercial solution:

- Streamline and modernize the application user experience for applicants, student, and college staff
- Robust features and self-service options for applicants and staff to expedite troubleshooting
- “Future-proof” technology that evolves with changing constituent needs and challenges and the rapid pace of technology change
- Requires a financial investment, but the cost to maintain and update is likely less than that of the current legacy application system
- New integrations with local student information systems that require local technology support
- Loss of full control with software and dependency on a single vendor

It can consolidate existing technology into a centralized place:



Continue with homegrown solution:

- Allows for customizations that may be more closely aligned to current needs
- Enables known processes to continue that does not require new integrations with district systems
- Requires a financial investment to build a new solution, but the cost to maintain and update is likely more than that of a commercial solution
- Requires full-time internal and contracted resources to maintain the technology and creates dependencies and a higher total cost of ownership
- The highly customized solution has accumulated a significant amount of technical debt that is challenging to maintain
- Delays in implementing improvements and new features because of competing team priorities and a reliance on custom development



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Commercial Solution Considerations

- Upfront investment is required, but the total cost of ownership is comparable and may be less than a home-grown solution
- A commercial solution platform will require a level of effort locally so sensitivity to timing the transition will be key
- Requires districts to dedicate some resources to the integration with local student information systems
- Will necessitate the maintenance of the legacy system until the commercial solution is developed and implemented across all 116 colleges
- Leverages existing expertise around system complexity, applicant needs, and the pace and variety of legislative changes
- Working with statewide stakeholders to determine the degree of standardization to optimize configuration of the commercial solution
- Some core elements of target state, such as customized user experiences, will involve some degree of user interface customization
- A change management strategy and plan is recommended to support successful adoption
- Timely and relevant communications for training and preparation for ‘go live’ date will be necessary
- Service level agreements will need to be created to ensure adequate levels of support by the vendor for areas such as configuration changes and training



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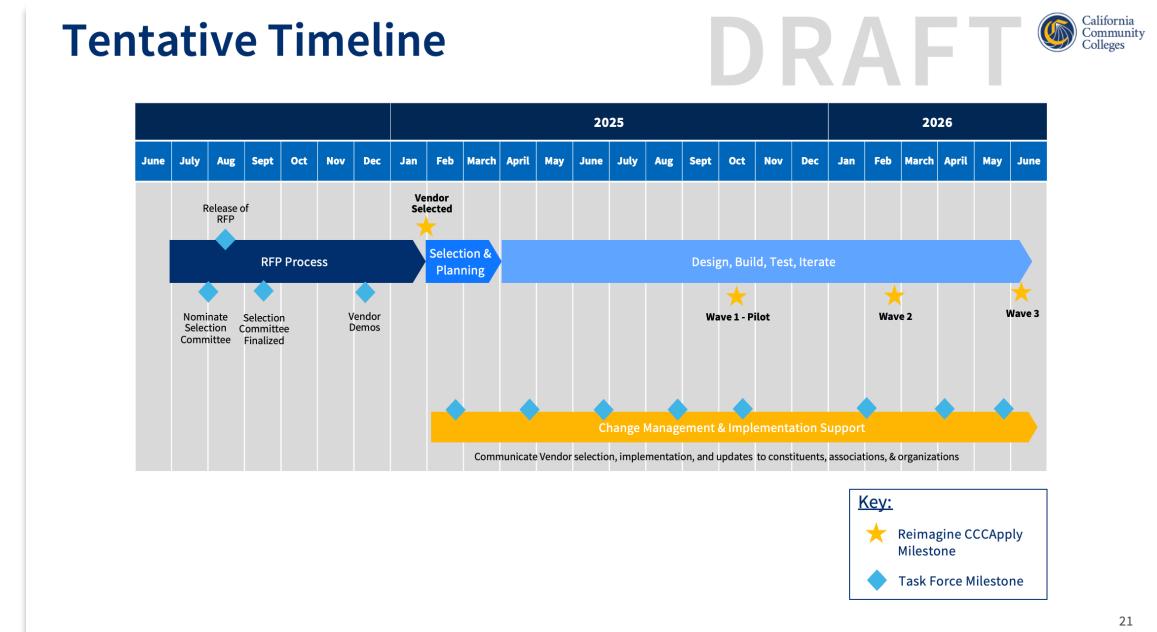
Tentative Timeline Approach

Discussion Points:

Tentative Timeline

- Task Force and the organizations to review the RFP before a proposed mid-August release date.
- Implementation would likely include three waves. Based on the Task Force discussion, the first wave would likely deploy in Q2 FY 25/26, the second wave in Q3 FY 25/26 and the third wave in Q4 FY 25/26. This deployment structure would help ensure ample timing for learning iterations and updates after each deployment.
- An implementation Advisory Group will be established after the selection committee process, consisting of volunteers from the Reimagine CCCApply Task Force and new members to represent the Wave 1 pilot colleges.
- Comment by Task Force member that a strong *Ethos* (Ellucian) integration would take the burden off local IT folks since most of the system is on an Ellucian SIS.
- EVC John Hetts shared the goal is always to make sure we are rolling out these changes with support for the colleges at multiple levels.
- Legacy system will be running for a year or more with the proposed timeline to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

Tentative Timeline





California Community Colleges

Thank you!

Contact Info:

[Reimagine Apply Website](#)
ReimagineApply@Accenture.com

www.cccco.edu



California Community Colleges

Welcome!

Reimagine Apply
Task Force
Session 4

May 15th, 2024

Your Facilitators & Support Team



Erica Harrold
Delivery Lead



Garrick Yau
Delivery Lead



Nicole Allport
Consultant



Sara Bunyard
Senior Analyst

Reimagine Apply Task Force

The Task Force will continue to give input on the Target State, new application governance and High-level Roadmap for implementation of a new application system.

	2024		Wednesday September 18 th TBD		Wednesday January 22 nd TBD	
In-Person						
Virtual		Wednesday May 15th Roadmap	Wednesday June 26th Input & Next Steps	Thursday August 8th TBD	Wednesday October 30th TBD	Wednesday December 4th TBD

TASK FORCE Members: Academic Senate, Student Senate, A&R, Financial Aid, CEO, CIO, CISO, CSSO, IR, PIO, CCCCO

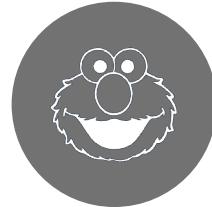
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Agreements



Timeboxed



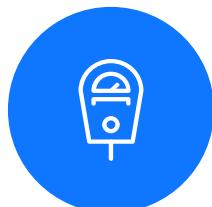
G E L M O
“Good Enough
Let’s Move On”



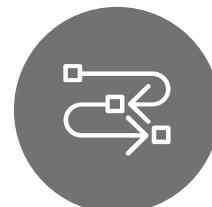
**Assume
Positive
Intent**



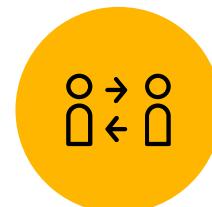
**Be present and
inclusive** (everyone
is heard)



Parking Lot



Trust the process

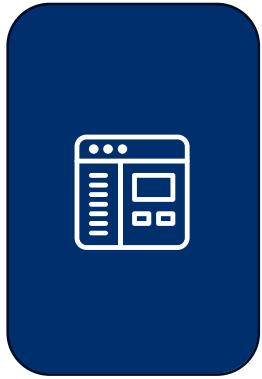


Give Grace



**Be curious and
solution-oriented**

May Task Force Objectives



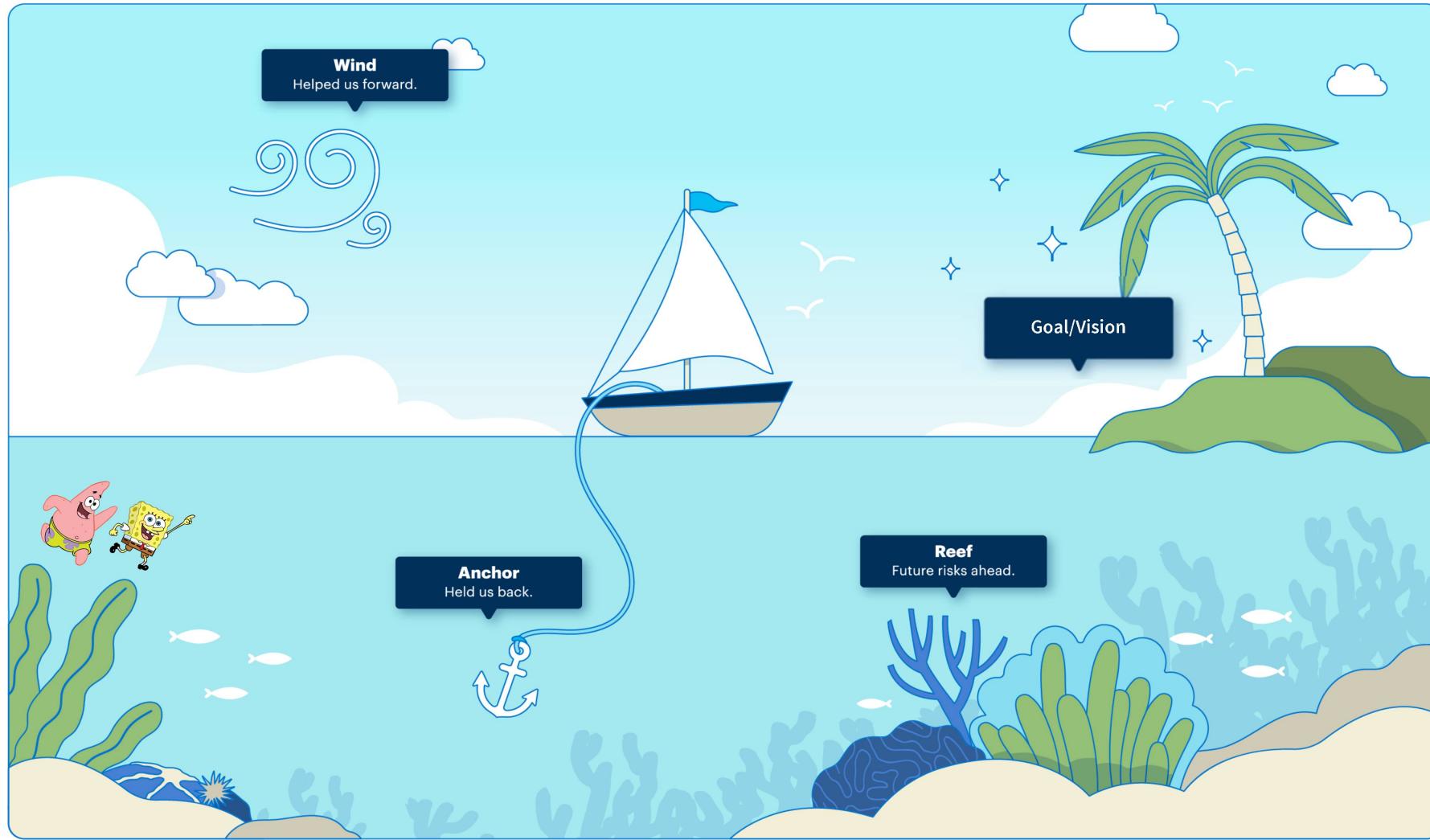
Collaborate on our
future state
application tools



Align on and iterate
CCCApply timeline and
process



Identify unanswered
questions and new
paths forward



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California
Community
Colleges

The invitation...

1. Share with your partner something challenging you've navigated in your professional or personal life.
2. **What supported you during that experience?**
3. **Were you able to turn the challenge into an opportunity?** How did you it?

Why Reimagine CCCApply

*The reimagination of the student application aims to make the process **quick and easy**, ensuring **accessibility and equity** when applying to California Community Colleges, ultimately opening doors for **career advancement and a brighter future** for all students.*



Improve the user
experience



Better support
equitable access



Increase data
accuracy



Protect against &
mitigate fraud

Future State Application Tooling

((o)) Commercial Solution

Commercial: Pros & Cons (1/2)

Pros of a commercial solution:

Student Experience

- Customizable Experiences Available** - Significant applicant and onboarding portal customization options to deliver modern, personalized, user-friendly experiences.
- Self-Service for Applicants** - Commercial solutions provide self-service support features including FAQ pages and chatbots for applicants to resolve issues on their own.
- Improved Support** - Provide chatbot features connect applicants to college staff, removing the applicant's burden to identify and contact college staff on their own.

Process Considerations

- Self-Service for Staff** - Commercial solutions provide knowledge bases, community forums, webinars, and on-demand trainings to help staff adopt the application tool.
- Reduced Manual Efforts** - Opportunity to automate time-consuming, manual activities that are tedious for college staff today.
- Easily Identify Applicant Groups** - Applicant classifications can be applied to prospects, submitted applications, reports, and dashboards to easily identify applicant groups.
- Streamlined Reporting and Improved Visibility** - Commercial application-level metrics, reports, and dashboard views, college-specific constituents, Colleges can have higher visibility of rates and relevant details.
- Consolidated Call Queues for Staff** - Applicant questions, staff queues, replacing manual tracking efforts via email or in-progress applicant cases.
- Robust Communication Options** - Provide several communication channels, SMS, push notifications, mailers, voice call recording options. GenAI features offered by some CRMs to help staff

Commercial: Pros & Cons (2/2)

Pros of a commercial solution:

Technology Considerations

- Institutionally Agnostic** - Commercial providers' core competency is to deliver CRM solutions, so they will continue to operate and deliver regardless of ongoing changes (regulatory, leadership, etc.) that take place within the CCC System.
- High Accountability** - Vendors are accountable to deliver their solutions based on contractual and SLA commitments. As one of their largest clients, CCCCO can receive regularity and shape future product releases based on their needs.
- Reliable Security Capabilities** - Commercial solutions offer effective security measures, maintain underlying security controls, and address security issues. Some providers support institutions in highly regulated spaces (e.g., West Point Academy.)
- Strong Integration Capabilities** - Application data flow can be streamlined and automated as commercial solutions can integrate with all SIS systems. Some provide near real-time integrations through best-in-class integration tools.
- College-level Workflow Opportunities** - Commercial solutions provide business rule engines that can allow colleges to configure certain views or activities to their college-specific ways of working and policies, which can provide the balance of flexibility to meet college-level needs while maintaining systemwide consistency.
- Potential to Address Technical Debt** - Commercial solutions maintain their own back-end infrastructure. Much of the Next Gen redesign aims to address technical debt collected from developing the homegrown solution. A commercial solution may address many foundational issues and decrease the technical debt fixes required.
- Long-term Sustainability** - Commercial solutions offer a cost-effective, robust alternative to homegrown application systems, which alternatively require long-term resource and financial investments to develop, maintain, and scale.



Cons of a commercial solution:

Student Experience

- Outdated Out-of-the-Box Designs** - Similar to other public sector systems, higher education application tools don't offer highly modernized user experiences out-of-the-box. Instead, most application tools offer add-on Experience Modules to deliver personalized and modern student experiences.
- Requires Add-ons** - Some of the target state, like the application chatbot, is unavailable out-of-the-box. The strongest application tools offer these items as add-ons, while newer application tools require extensive customization to develop these items.

Process Considerations

- Transition Period** - The CCCCO will need to maintain the current homegrown solution until the target state application is configured and adopted across all 116 Colleges, CCCCTC and College Staff will have to operate in these dual environments concurrently for a period.
- Significant Abrupt Change** - A degree of change is necessary to replace the homegrown solution. College stakeholders are facing high change fatigue from other on-going initiatives.



Homegrown Solution

Homegrown (Next Gen): Pros & Cons (1/2)

Pros of a homegrown solution:

Student Experience

- Less Customization Limitations** - Homegrown systems empower organizations to build fully customized user interfaces and applicant-facing features.
- Applicant Familiarity and Domain Knowledge** - The homegrown system would be updated by the CCCCTC, which is well-versed in the CCCApply application process, regulatory changes and constraints, and the existing applicant-specific needs.

Process Considerations

- Gradual Transitions** - Homegrown systems facilitate the incremental rollout of features, easing the transition process for college stakeholders.
- Enhanced Flexibility** - Homegrown systems support dynamic prioritization, roadmap adjustments, and altering features to accommodate changing needs. They offer the agility to pivot work, as necessary.
- Responsiveness to Legislative Changes** - Homegrown systems provide full control over response strategies and timelines when addressing system update, although other considerations may affect the timeline.
- Existing Expertise** - Enhancing the homegrown system leverage its existing expertise around the statewide test system complexities.
- Less Change Required** - Modernizing the existing homegrown system requires less near-term change than adopting a commercial solution.



Cons of a homegrown solution:

Student Experience

- Delay in User Experience Enhancements** - Due to competing priorities, enhancements to applicant experience may be delayed by legislative mandates or urgent system changes.
- Applicant Support Limitations** - Any new self-service applicant support, chatbot, or case management features must be developed from the ground up or integrated into the homegrown system through custom development.

Process Considerations

- Feature Delays** - Creating new features from the ground up requires significant time, effort, and resources. This can cause delays, particularly when regulatory items take precedence over feature requests.
- Competing Priorities and Limited Resources** - CCCCTC is responsible for owning and maintaining all system components as well as developing new features. Since their workload extends beyond maintaining and updating the application, they are likely to be diverted from new feature development to other urgent priorities as

Homegrown (NextGen): Pros & Cons (2/2)

Pros of a homegrown solution:

Technology Considerations

- Unlimited Customization Options** - Homegrown systems typically allow for more customization of functionality and user experience than commercial products.
- Lower Upfront Cost** - Due to the existing functionality and gradual transition, the homegrown system will have a lower upfront cost than a new commercial product.
- Experience with SIS Complexity** - The CCCCTC has experience working with the statewide technology landscape, particularly the various SIS systems used by colleges.
- Fraud Expertise** - CCCCTC has in-depth knowledge of the evolving fraud challenges faced across the 116 colleges and has developed tailored solutions to address these items. Commercial application tools lack this application fraud expertise.
- Use of Existing Capabilities** - Modernizing the current homegrown system allows the CCCCTC to continue to use functionality that is effective in the current state, such as pieces of the AWS framework. While much of the system requires modernization, changes can be enacted in phases, preserving much of the current state system while pieces are updated and minimizing impacts to stakeholders.

Cons of a homegrown solution:

Technology Considerations

- High Maintenance Costs** - Homegrown systems require long-term resource and financial investments to develop and maintain.
- Substantial Custom Development Required** - In homegrown systems, an organization must build and maintain everything, not just their strengths or key differentiators. This increases required costs and resources and can result in the re-development of products that already exist.
- Piecemeal Engineering** - Homegrown systems may have more customization than needed due to the many opportunities for custom requests. These custom features can be difficult to maintain and reduce consistency across the system.
- Resource Intensive Teams Required** - To develop a robust homegrown system, several solutioning experts are required with knowledge in respective tooling areas, which may be expensive in the long run. These expertise areas include product designers, product managers, software engineers, security engineers, QA testers, and data architects.
- Integration Limitations** - Glue currently fulfills the functions of pushing application data to colleges, but its ongoing maintenance, self-management, and containerization is potentially an unnecessary burden on the organization.
- Scalability Limitations** - Due to the high investment required to develop and scale homegrown solutions, scalability is potentially limited.
- Best Practice Constraints** - Homegrown systems lack industry best practices due to their custom nature and development process. Current friction points include communications, reporting, security, and automation capabilities.



Commercial vs. Homegrown



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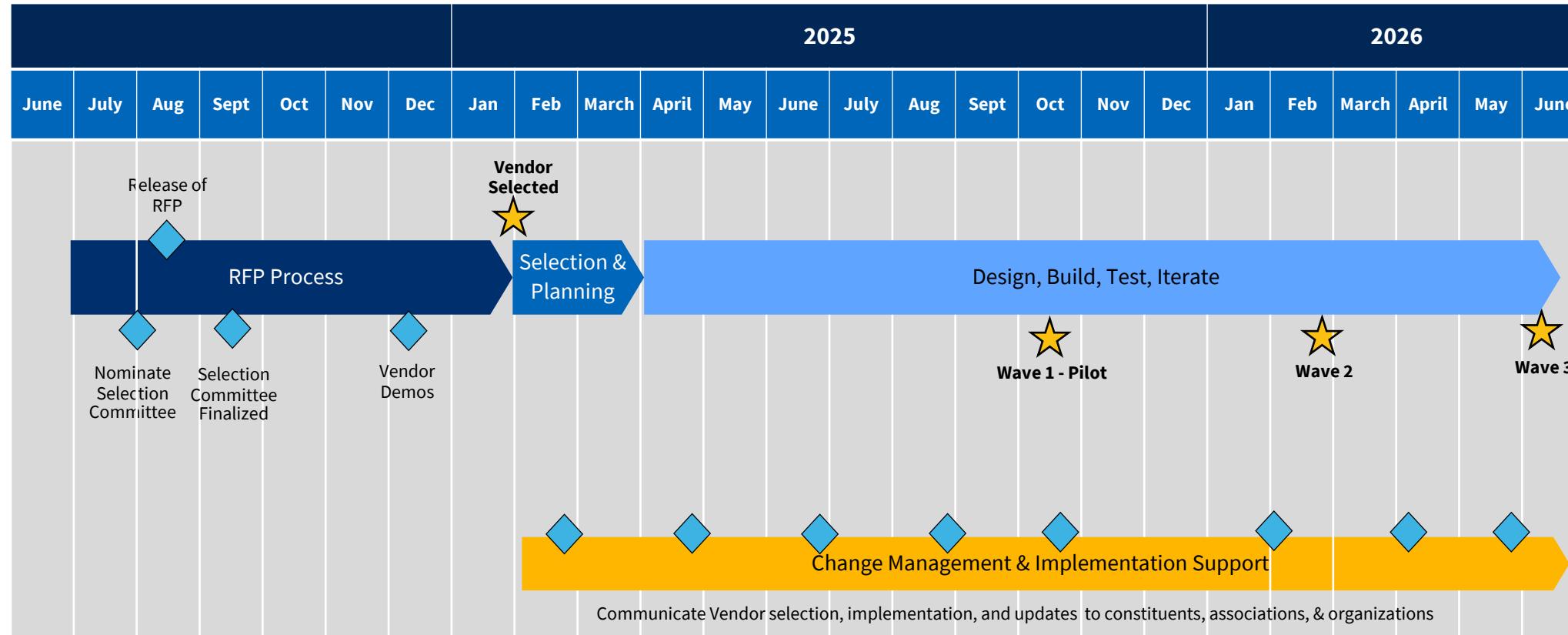
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Service level agreements will need to be created to ensure adequate levels of support by the vendor for areas such as configuration changes and training

Tentative Timeline

DRAFT



Key:

- ★ Reimagine CCCApply Milestone
- ◆ Task Force Milestone

Next Steps

Upcoming Task Forces:

