

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION GRANT PROPOSAL

Program Title: WebCats

Submitted by: Associated Students of the University of Arizona

Jim Drnek, Associate Dean

520.621.2782

Bookstore 325W

drnek@u.arizona.edu

Bldg 19, Suite 325W, Tucson AZ. 85721

Steven Gerner, ASUA Senator

480.213.7573

Bookstore 325W

sgerner@u.arizona.edu

Bldg 19, Suite 325W, Tucson AZ. 85721

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OVERVIEW OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA:

Since 1914, the Associated Students of the University of Arizona (ASUA) has represented the interests and needs of the student body. Working with the University Administration, the Arizona Board of Regents, state and local officials, and the Arizona State Legislature, ASUA ensures the voice of students is effectively heard. ASUA offers a wide variety of programs and services that students utilize including reducing textbook costs, raising funds for scholarships, and free evening motor vehicle transportation.

GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY:

WebCats supports student organizations in achieving their mission statement and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of student organizations' operations by providing an integrated suite of web based group communication, collaboration, and productivity tools. WebCats engages web based technology for more effective interaction with and communication of information used by University of Arizona students.

STATEMENT OF NEED:

Over five-hundred (500) student organizations exist at the University of Arizona with a diverse array of goals. Recent developments in web based technology open new opportunities and challenges to these student organizations. While this web based technology allows student organizations to more broadly market themselves and quickly communicate with members, many student organizations lack the technical expertise necessary to capitalize on this technology. Significant need exists for a simple and flexible service which will quickly open these technological opportunities to student organizations while allowing organizations to tailor the service to their particular situation.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

WebCats is designed to assist student organizations with communication, collaboration, and productivity by harnessing the low cost and broad reach of the Internet. WebCats creates a uniform, simple, and easy to access space for student organizations to use various services including: UA Student Organization registration, a content management system & website builder, member management tools to allow tracking of and communication with members, intra-club discussion via forums, event and project management, and rudimentary document sharing and creation tools. In addition to these organization specific tools, WebCats creates a "living encyclopedia" or wiki for organizations to share and build on their collective experience with important skills such as fundraising, recruitment, and member retention. WebCats focuses on creating a simple and easy to use foundation for users with limited technical expertise to access these services while providing the opportunity for advanced users to develop and expand functionality. WebCats empowers every student organization to harness the power of the internet to further their organization's goals. Specifically, WebCats shall include the following feature set:

- ✓ Student Organization Registration System: Takes an organization through the entire process of creating an official student organization at the University of Arizona in a process that is far more convenient to students than the current manual system.

- ✓ Personalized Content Management System / Website Builder: Enables organizations to easily create and personalize a website with access to advanced features such as blogs, photo galleries, forums, etc.
- ✓ Member Management System: Enables organizations to track and easily communicate with members. Includes the ability for members to remotely update personal information, tracking of dues and attendance, and easy mass and personalized communication through electronic and physical mailings.
- ✓ Event Management and Universal Calendar System: Enables organizations to easily create, market and track on-campus and off-campus events. Includes access to a universal student organization calendar system so individual students may easily find and attend events hosted by student organizations.
- ✓ Budget Management: Enables organizations to track and monitor expenses and income and maintain up to date records on the current organization's budget.
- ✓ Document Sharing & Basic Creation/Editing: Enables organizations to create, edit, share, and comment on word processing, spreadsheet, and slideshow documents between select members or the entire organization. Potential uses include commenting on fundraising letters and adding agenda items for weekly meetings.
- ✓ Student Organization Wiki: Creates an online "living encyclopedia" in which student organizations can share their collective experience with tasks essential to club operations, identify best practices, and learn from one another.

WebCats is based on student designed, owned, and operated infrastructure ensuring flexibility in adapting the project to changing demand. ASUA is partnering with the Management and Information Systems Association (MISA), a student organization representing MIS majors, to develop and code the web based software suite this project will run on. We are seeking funding to cover expenses associated with software programming and developing each of the functions listed above. This project is being developed as part of a larger joint project between ASUA and the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL). This larger project will develop a base infrastructure upon which each of these modules may run. ASUA is funding \$12,000 towards the development of the underlying server software (the base infrastructure) in partnership with CSIL. On top of this infrastructure will run various modules which provide the desired functionality. This grant is seeking funding for the development of a small set of these modules as outlined above.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS:

- ✓ Increases student engagement which increases achievement, retention, and graduation rates. WebCats empowers student organizations to effectively reach a broad array of students increasing the student body's engagement in extracurricular activities and thereby significantly increasing retention rates.
- ✓ Reinforces scholarship and academic standards by providing opportunities to practically apply these skills. WebCats empowers student organizations to more effectively meet their

objectives by expanding the technical skill base of organizations and linking learning objectives to real world problems.

- ✓ Increases the University's recognition enhancing the value of student's degrees. WebCats empowers competition based student organizations to enhance their skills through effective communication bringing recognition to the University.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Increase the efficiency of student organizations' operations.
- ✓ Improve the effectiveness of communication between student organizations and current and potential members.
- ✓ Promote cooperation and collaboration between student organizations and the development of student organizations' technical expertise
- ✓ Increase the number and diversity of students engaged in student organizations.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY:

The program will be assessed through pre and post evaluations. A mandatory survey will be administered to the executive board members of each participating student organization prior to and after utilizing the service. The survey will compare the effectiveness of operations while using existing collaboration and communication mechanisms and the new service. Furthermore, a sample of student organization members will be randomly selected and surveyed prior to and after use of the new service to determine how the end recipient of the service feels about the use of WebCats and the quality of service delivered.

PROJECTED BUDGET:

Projected Expenses:

Staff Support:

Item	Cost	# of Items	Total Cost
Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) Developer and Graphics Designer	\$1000.00	1	\$1000.00
Structured Query Language (SQL) and Hypertext Processor (PHP) Programmer	\$1000.00	3	\$3000.00
Java, JavaScript, and Hypertext Mark Language (HTML) Programmer	\$1000.00	1	\$1000.00
Information Systems Project Manager	\$1200.00	1	\$1200.00
TOTAL:			\$6200.00

Staff members are all University Students. In addition to providing a small stipend to subsidize the cost of staff members' time, ASUA is working with each student to secure internship credit.

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Software:

Item	Cost	# of Items	Total Cost
Commercial Software Licensing Fees	\$1650.00	1	\$1650.00
TOTAL:			\$1650.00

Whenever possible, WebCats is using free open source software; however, cost assessments of a few components essential to the program operations suggest purchasing pre-built commercial software is less expensive than developing from scratch components with the desired functionality and/or modifying open source components.

Total Requested: \$7850.00

Potential Funding Sources:

ASUA Funding –

ASUA is paying \$12,000 towards the development of a base infrastructure which this and other projects may run on. The \$12,000 is being paid to an outside company who will develop a flexible and robust infrastructure which will allow modules with desired functionality to be added and modified as needed over time.

Partnership –

ASUA has partnered with the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL) and the UA Center for Computing and Information Technology (CCIT). CSIL is providing support in developing the underlying infrastructure this project will run on. Additionally, through ASUA's partnership with CCIT, ASUA has secured free hardware and computing resources and subsidize long term maintenance costs.

Grants & Corporate Support–

ASUA is actively pursuing the following grants and financial support from the follow organizations & businesses:

Cisco Impact Grant

Ikon Grant

Intel Grant

Microsoft IT Capacity Building Grant

University of Arizona Foundation Board of Director Grant

Verizon Foundation Technology Grant

Xerox Grant