

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

FOR

A TACRAO MEMBER INSTITUTION TO HOST THE
TEXAS COMMON COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM (TCCNS)
DATABASE AND WEBSITE

Responses Due on
May 18, 2008

For Information, Contact:

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Request for Proposal (RFP)

I. Background Information

The Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS) is a voluntary, cooperative effort among Texas community colleges and universities to facilitate transfer of freshman- and sophomore-level general academic coursework. The TCCNS System provides a shared, uniform set of course designations for students and their advisors to use in determining both course equivalency and degree applicability of transfer credit on a statewide basis. When students transfer between two participating TCCNS institutions, a course taken at the sending institution transfers as the course carrying, or cross-references with, the same TCCNS designation at the receiving institution.

Over 100 institutions of higher learning in Texas participate in the TCCNS project. Most community colleges have replaced their internal course numbering systems with TCCNS designations; most universities cross-reference their courses with the TCCNS system. One of the stellar aspects of the TCCNS during the development process was that it was completely voluntary and not mandated by the state government in Texas.

II. History

In November of 1973, the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) appointed a committee to study the feasibility of a uniform course numbering system for all postsecondary institutions in Texas, chaired by Zack Prince of UT-Arlington. The committee's report was forwarded by Dr. Bevington Reed, then Commissioner of Higher Education, to the president of each institution in Texas; although most comments indicated that implementation of such a system on a statewide basis was not feasible at that time, over the next few years many institutions opted to change their course numbering systems in response to growing course inventories and computerization of student records. In the process many adopted the general form of the proposed TACRAO model, though without coordinating their course numbers with other institutions.

Recognizing a high rate of student transfer among their campuses, the presidents of the nine junior/community colleges in the Texas Gulf Coast Community College Consortium appointed a committee to develop a shared numbering system for their institutions. The committee worked from August, 1987, through October, 1989, and finally settled on the basic numbering structure previously proposed by TACRAO, but tied the new course designations to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB)

Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) to provide a common point of reference for course content, credit value, and sequencing. By 1989 all two-year colleges in the Gulf Coast Consortium had committed to the new numbering system.

In 1990 the THECB appointed a committee to revise the *ACGM* and the committee recommended that a common course numbering system or a state equivalency table should be developed covering freshman- and sophomore-level coursework at both junior/community colleges and universities. In January of 1991, TACRAO's assistance was requested by THECB in determining the feasibility of a statewide common course numbering system. Then president, John Edwards, appointed a Task Force jointly chaired by Dale Hardgrove of San Jacinto College and Zack Prince of UT-Arlington. In parallel action, regional meetings were held with representatives from universities and junior/community colleges; these meetings were successful in persuading institutions to join the project.

In November, 1992, the TACRAO Task Force recommended that an independent governing board be established for the ongoing management and operation of the TCCNS; once approved the newly constituted TCCNS Board convened in February of 1993; in October of that year the Board published the first Course Matrix, the master list of all Common Courses offered at participating TCCNS institutions statewide. In August of 1994, the TCCNS entered into a three-year agreement to establish East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce [TAMU-C]) as the Data Base Site for the TCCNS.

In June of 1998, a ten-year agreement was made between TAMU-C, TCCNS, TACRAO, Texas Community College Instructional Administrators (TCCIA, formerly known as TAJCCIA), and the Texas Council of Public University Chief Academic Officers (TCPUCAO). TAMU-C continued as the host for the TCCNS database and TACRAO agreed to serve as the fiscal agent (collecting dues, dispersing funds, and approving the TCCNS annual proposed budget), among other responsibilities that include finding "a new host institution for the TCCNS database, and negotiating a new contract therewith."

III. Current Situation

Although the agreement with TAMU-C was scheduled to end June 30, 2008, the TCCNS agreed with a request in 2007 from the TACRAO Executive Committee (TEC) to extend the agreement to August 31, 2008, to align the agreement with the school year; the agreement also addressed the need to include hosting the TCCNS website, which TAMU-C had voluntarily assumed.

IV. Specific Request

This Request for Proposal is to identify a new host institution for both the TCCNS database and website. Two versions will be considered:

A) host site of the TCCNS database and website, with provision for occasional remote access by the off-site TCCNS Coordinator for routine updates and maintenance of the files;

B) host site of the TCCNS database and website, plus identifying an on-site position to serve as the TCCNS Coordinator (with job duties as required by the TCCNS Board that include, but are not limited to, calling and setting the agendas for Board meetings; initial screening of requests for new TCCNS course numbers; serving as a liaison to the ACGM Committee, etc.)

V. Specifications

The TCCNS Database and Website host institution should have available a Windows IIS web server to host the ASP coded website. The new host institution will have the domain ownership transferred and nameserver records changed to that of the institution. On the host's server, FTP access will be required to allow the Coordinator (whether on-site or off-site) to make adjustments and changes to website information. For each year the database is recompiled, the host institution will run a VB application to compile all of the spreadsheets from each institution into an Access Database to be added to the matrix; the previous year's database will be archived. A reliable (preferably off-site) backup system should also be in place to ensure that the TCCNS records remain intact in the event of hardware failure or other unforeseen issues. The space requirements for the database should require no more than one (1) gigabyte.

Ideally, this would be taken on as a development project by the new hosting institution to introduce additional functionality of a robust SQL database, secure log-in, direct database editing via the web (all to eliminate the need for individual institution spreadsheets, compilation, and to better safeguard the data).

The length of time covered by the proposal should be clearly noted.

VI. Timeline

Release of RFP	May 2, 2008
Proposal Submission Due Date	May 18, 2008
Selection of Host(s)	May 20, 2008
Database & Website Active	September 1, 2008

VII. Submission Requirements

Proposal must be submitted electronically (i.e. via e-mail and/or as an attachment to e-mail) by 4:00 p.m. on May 18, 2008, to jneighbors@nctc.edu, with "TCCNS RFP" in the Subject Line.

Any additional information that proposing institution believes to be relevant to this RFP and its capabilities to provide the services requested (i.e. products, brochures, additional documents, may be attached to the e-mail submission, and/or faxed to (940) 668-3320 or mailed (to be received by deadline) to:

Janie Neighbors, TEC
1525 W California
Gainesville, TX 76240

VIII. RFP Guidelines

The release of this request does not imply any commitment or obligation on the part of TACRAO, the TEC, or the TCCNS or any of their representatives to accept in whole or in part any proposal submitted.

Any proposal that deviates from, or contradicts, the specifications or does not satisfy the timetable that has herein been established may be disqualified from consideration.

IX. Confidentiality

The TEC considers all information contained within this RFP to be confidential information.