UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

STEP Committee

Technology Fee Application

Enhancement of Student Services for the Office of the University Registrar: Ring Central

Title

Amy Bourque

Name of Submitter

(Faculty or Staff Only)

Office of the University Registrar

Organization

Title:	Enhancement of Student Services for the Office of the University Registrar: RingCentral	Date:	10/13/2020

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Department/College/Org: Office of the University Registrar

ABSTRACT (250 words or less):

The Office of the University Registrar (OUR) provides a myriad of quality, accurate, timely, and courteous student services. The OUR serves a diverse population of students (including current, former, and prospective students), faculty, advisors, staff, parents, alumni, and the general public. The OUR utilizes a Cisco telephone system from the 1990s that has limited capabilities to provide services over the telephone. Due to limitations with this old telephone system, we are seeking to secure the Ring Central cloud-based telephone system to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of services that we can provide to students.

The Ring Central cloud-based phone system would provide customer service personnel the ability to respond to a high volume of customer inquiries in a more effective and efficient manner. In addition to these service enhancements, Ring Central would also provide our office with the ability to provide remote services to students when necessary. This functionality is critical during public health emergencies such as COVID-19, natural disasters such as hurricanes, and other times when students may require remote services.

When the University quickly shifted to remote operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current phone system did not have the functionality needed to properly manage our main telephone line. This limitation impacted the quality of services. After researching and evaluating multiple solutions, RingCentral was the top choice due to the desired functionality, cost-effectiveness, minimal technical maintenance needs, and user-accessibility. RingCentral is considered the #1 cloud-based phone system service that uses the Internet to deliver all the features of a physical telephone operation.

We are requesting a STEP grant to fund this program for an initial one-year agreement with RingCentral. While we intend to continue our attempt to secure long-term funding for Ring Central, we are requesting "seed funding" to help get the project off the ground. This one-year agreement would cover the cost of five main telephone lines, provide access to the RingCentral engagement voice solution amenities, and pay for the one-time setup fee. This addition will prove to be vital in furthering our mission of providing timely and quality service to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the general public.

Purpose of Grant

Providing quality student services in a timely, accurate, and courteous manner is a top priority for the Office of the University Registrar. Our office services a high volume of customers, including approximately 17,000 current undergraduate and graduate students and over 2,600 faculty, advisors, and staff. The OUR also provides services to hundreds of thousands of alumni, prospective students, parents/guardians, and other members of the campus community and general public.

Over the past year, the OUR has received requests for customer services from over 5,000 in-office customers, over 3,000 telephone customers, and over 10,000 email and web chat customers. The OUR provides critical customer service regarding a myriad of critical student services, including:

- Registration
- Official transcripts
- Transfer credit evaluations
- Commencement & graduation
- Degree Works degree audit system
- Enrollment and degree verifications
- NCAA athletic eligibility certification
- Training for faculty, advisors, and staff
- Support for faculty, advisors, and other campus offices

Due to the technical limitations of the current telephone system that was implemented in the 1990s, the OUR is not able to provide the level of effective and efficient telephone services that customers have come to expect. The current phone system has limited functionality to assist the customer service personnel in providing service over the telephone, and it provides very limited functionality to continue services during campus closures (such as due to public health crises and natural disasters).

Ring Central will enhance the quality and quantity of student services. Its cloud-based system and engaged voice solution functionality will provide the following benefits for students, faculty, and advisors:

- Ability for customer service personnel to easily respond to customer phone calls
- Ability to manage and monitor multiple phone lines simultaneously during peak call periods, such as during registration and final grade posting
- Voicemail to email transcribing of messages for faster callback times
- Ability to assess customer satisfaction through automated call surveys
- Electronic call logs to ensure workload balance and to enhance management of telephone services

Ring Central will also enable OUR to respond to the increased demand from customers for remote services. This is especially critical given the frequency of hurricanes and other severe weather in South Louisiana, as well as the anticipated impacts of COVID-19 and future "waves" of increased infection over the next 12 months and beyond.

RingCentral is the #1 cloud business phone system in the United States that uses the internet to deliver all the features of an on-premises telephone that seamlessly incorporates multiple locations and remote employees. RingCentral effortlessly integrates with any computer, smartphone, or tablet; meaning, the OUR can manage the entire RingCentral phone system from anywhere with an internet connection. Some of the enhancements that would be available any time include:

- seamless connection with no disruption of student services to our customers
- ability to manage multiple telephone calls simultaneously
- fast and effective student services to our customers
- voicemail to email transcription for faster response rates
- customer feedback through satisfaction surveys to enhance the callers' experience
- option to record conversations for quality and training purposes
- call log reports to manage staff and adjust to coordinate with the influx of telephone calls

With all these amenities, we can raise the bar with customer satisfaction and give our customers greater access to reach our department. In addition, with the projections of COVID-19 potentially forcing our offices back to remote operations in the future, we want to ensure there are no disruptions of student services.

With a limited budget, the OUR has secured funding for the purchase of RingCentral's baseline features, five laptops, and headsets to utilize RingCentral. Due to budget constraints, we were unable to secure funding for the service and set-up fee this budget year. While we intend to continue our attempt to secure long-term funding for Ring Central, we are requesting "seed funding" to help get the project off the ground. Since Ring Central is cloud-based, maintenance and updates will be managed by the vendor, with minimal work needed from OUR or Information Technology personnel.

We are requesting a STEP grant to fund our office main telephone lines, the RingCentral engagement voice solution amenities, and the one-time setup fee. The cost of five telephone lines is roughly $6,836.28 for a one-year service agreement. The one-time setup fee cost is $10,900, for a total cost of $17,736.28 being requested. We are confident that Ring Central will provide the needed infrastructure to enable the OUR to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customer services, and to better support our students, faculty, advisors, and support staff.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Budget Proposal

1. **Equipment** $0.00

2. **Software** $0.00

3. **Supplies** $0.00

4. **Maintenance** $0.00

5. **Personnel** $0.00

6. **Other**   One-time set-up fee $10,900
5 lines with engaged voice system amenities = $6,836.28/one-year service

TOTAL: **$17,736.28**