

Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

To: Interested Parties

From: Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D.

CC: ITS Project Number 49011

Date: September 16, 2025

Re: Sole Source Certification Number 4704 to provide degree planning software for the University of Southern Mississippi (USM)

Contact Name: Denetta Durr

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8022

Contact E-mail Address: Denetta.durr@its.ms.gov

Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 4704 for the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), please be advised that ITS intends to award HighPoint Technology Services, Inc., as the sole source provider of degree-planning software in an amount not to exceed \$443,925.00 for a three-year period. Please be advised that ITS will determine if additional modules, subscriptions, upgrades, services, and support are within scope during the certification period and may increase the spending authority accordingly. Should HighPoint Technology Services, Inc., change their name during this certification period, then ITS will determine if a recertification is necessary. For an explanation regarding Mississippi state law, policy and procedures for sole source procurements, refer to Attachment B: Sole Source Procurement Overview.

Sole Source Criteria

1. The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exist:

HighPoint Degree Planner is a PeopleSoft Campus Solutions technology product for higher education institutions that solves financial aid and student success/advising pain points. It is currently the only product in the market that provides automatic sequencing for course planning, which allows a student's degree plan to dynamically update whenever a student or advisor opens their plan. This particular software improves graduation rates by allowing students to plan, schedule courses, and complete their degree programs more efficiently by letting students explore various scenarios with course planning to determine which plan fits the students' graduation needs. It anticipates course and program demand with analytics that will be generated with the degree planner and a schedule builder.

2. The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services:

The Degree Planner system provides a seamless student/faculty/advisor user experience for tracking student progress and graduation timelines for course planning, utilizing the data housed inside USM's PeopleSoft system. The Degree Planner automatically helps students identify the courses they should take to graduate and indicates the sequence in which to take them. The software can even be used by USM prospects to plan degree and graduation timelines before they enroll into the university. The system will also provide real time course demand data that can be used by administrators to plan future courses and programs.

3. The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and not through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services:

HighPoint Technology Services, Inc., is the sole provider for the products and services related to Degree Planner. The Vendor's sole source certification letter is included as Attachment A.

Schedule

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date	09/16/25
Second Advertisement Date	09/23/25
Response Deadline From Objectors	09/30/25 at 3:00 P.M. Central Time
Notice of Award/No Award Posted	Not before 10/01/25

Project Details

The University of Southern Mississippi is seeking to add and embed new degree-planning software into its existing student information system, PeopleSoft, which was procured via an in-house sole source without ITS involvement as it fell below threshold for ITS purview. HighPoint Technology Services, Inc.'s degree planning software will be directly implemented into PeopleSoft. The software will work in real time to allow students and advisors to determine the best path for degree progression and final graduation.

Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the degree planning software should not be certified as a sole source should provide information in the following format for the state to use in determining whether or not to proceed with awarding the Sole Source contract to HighPoint Technology Services, Inc.

1.1 Interested Party Information

1.1.1 Contact Name, Phone Number and email address

1.1.2 Company Website URL, if applicable

1.2 Objection to Sole Source Certification

1.2.1 Interested parties must present specific objections to the Sole Source certification using the criteria listed above.

1.2.2 A statement regarding the Interested Party's capabilities as related to this Sole Source Certification Request.

1.3 Comments will be accepted at any time prior to Tuesday, September 30, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Denetta Durr at denetta.durr@its.ms.gov or at the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, 3771 Eastwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39211. Responses may be delivered by hand, via regular mail, overnight delivery, e-mail or by fax. Fax number is (601) 713-6380. ITS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DELAYS IN THE DELIVERY OF RESPONSES. It is solely the responsibility of the Interested Parties that responses reach ITS on time. Interested Parties may contact Denetta Durr to verify the receipt of their Responses. Responses received after the deadline will be rejected.

1.4 Interested Party responses should include the following information:

SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO Sole Source Certification No. 4704 Accepted until September 30, 2025 @ 3:00 p.m., ATTENTION: Denetta Durr

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Denetta Durr at 601-432-8022 or via email at denetta.durr@its.ms.gov.



Date: April 22, 2025

To: Director, Purchasing

University of Southern Mississippi

Request for Approval of HighPoint Software and Implementation Services as a Sole Source Acquisition

University of Southern Mississippi (USM) currently has PeopleSoft Campus Solutions installed to meet student administrative needs. The following critical items are not provided in the delivered Campus Solutions modules:

- Automated Student degree planning
- Analytics on course demand, scheduling and other Degree Planning activities
- Student course scheduling
- Modern Design Thinking UI/UX interface

HighPoint Products will provide the following improvements:

- Improve graduation rates by allowing students to better plan and schedule courses and degree completion.
- Anticipate course and program demand with analytics that will be generated with degree planner and schedule builder.
- Provide a seamless student/faculty/advisor user experience to navigate removing technology obstacles that are currently present.
- Provide effective and clear communication with students giving them targeted and important information that can be tracked.

HighPoint began 15 years ago exclusively as a PeopleSoft Campus Solutions technology company for higher education institutions, building value added technology to solve Financial Aid and Student Success/Advising pain points. They recognized the opportunity to provide all PeopleSoft Campus Solutions users with add-on products built specifically to help students succeed and institutions to meet their goals effectively.

Currently, over 150 institutions are using some or all of the HighPoint products to meet their needs. This list includes University of California Berkeley, University of Pittsburgh, Boston University, Florida International University, California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo, Southern Methodist University.

HighPoint is the sole provider for the products and services related to Degree Planner.

Degree Planner



HighPoint Technology Solutions
2332 Galiano Street, 2nd Floor
Coral Gables, FL 33134

HighPoint's Degree Planner automatically helps students identify the courses they should take to graduate and clearly indicates the sequence in which to take them. Students can explore various scenarios and see which plan fits their needs to graduate on time.

Key functions that make it unique:

- It is the only current product in the market that provides automatic sequencing for course planning allowing a student's degree plan to dynamically update whenever a student or advisor opens up their plan.
- There are no third-party integrations needed with another system or cloud service to manage and update student and course data.
- Data is housed inside current PeopleSoft system eliminating data security concerns.
- Degree planner is integrated with Schedule Builder making term and career planning much easier.
- Prospects can use degree planner before being enrolled.

USM benefits include:

- USM students will be able to have a clear plan allowing advising to be more targeted and frees up advisor's time instead of lengthy and manual plan building.
- High school students can use degree planner to explore USM classes for their major before even applying and thus helping recruitment efforts.

Real time course demand data will be available to administrators to help plan future courses and programs.

HIGHPOINT TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS, INC.

By: 
Name: George Amador
Title: Chief Executive Officer

Attachment B

The acquisition of information technology for all state agencies and institutions of higher learning (IHLs) is within the scope of the ITS law, found in Mississippi Code Section 25-53-1, et seq., and the policies and procedures established in accordance with this statute, found in the ITS Procurement Handbook posted on the ITS website (www.its.ms.gov).

ITS enabling legislation requires that information technology hardware, software and services be acquired in a manner that insures the maximum of competition among all manufacturers and suppliers of such equipment and services. Accordingly, ITS promotes full and open competition through the issuance of open specifications and the objective evaluation of Interested Party proposals to determine the lowest and best offering to meet an agency's or public university's business requirements. True competition protects the integrity and credibility of purchasing in the public sector and is essential in providing best value and adequate contractual protection for the purchasing entity. In certain limited situations, information technology acquisitions may be sole-sourced.

ITS utilizes the provisions of Public Purchasing Law for Sole Source and Emergency procurements of information technology. Mississippi Public Purchasing Law (Mississippi Code Section 31-7-13) specifies that noncompetitive items available from one source only be exempted from bid requirements (sole-sourced). ITS statute, in Section 25-53-5 (p), permits ITS to utilize provisions in Public Purchasing Law or regulations, when applicable.

Per Public Purchasing law, acquisitions must meet the following criteria to be authorized as sole source:

1. The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exists,
2. The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services, AND
3. The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and NOT through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services. The vendor's correspondence regarding this criterion for this project is included as Attachment A.

By policy as documented in the ITS Procurement Handbook, acquisitions of IT services must include the following information to be authorized as sole source:

1. An explanation about why the amount to be expended is reasonable, and
2. An explanation regarding the efforts by the purchaser to obtain the best possible price.

For state agencies, approval of all technology purchases with a lifecycle cost of \$5,000 or less, including sole source purchases, has been delegated to the agency. The ITS Procurement Limits Policies for Agencies (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook) require a minimum of two competitive written bids or proposals for technology purchases with a lifecycle cost over \$5,000 but not over \$75,000 (not over \$25,000 for projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act). Since, for single source items, the procuring agency will be unable to obtain two written bids, ITS must certify all sole source acquisitions of information technology with a lifecycle cost greater than \$5,000.

Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) or public universities have been delegated the authority to certify sole source procurements up to \$250,000 lifecycle cost under the ITS Procurement Limits Policies for IHLs (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook). For the certification of sole source procurements delegated to the CIOs at public universities, the public university must follow ITS' Sole Source Procedure, including advertisement of the intent to award as sole source. Institutions certifying a sole source purchase must ensure the criteria listed above are met and documented in writing by the institution and the Interested Party prior to certifying a product or service as sole source. Sole source documentation must be reviewed and approved by the IHL's CIO for any sole-source certification above \$5,000. All sole source documentation should be retained in the public university's procurement file. Sole source requests above \$250,000 lifecycle cost require ITS approval.

Other than the delegations outlined above, all sole source technology procurements must be certified by ITS.

ITS thoroughly reviews Sole Source Certification Requests, determining if competing products and/or services exist. If so, ITS conducts a competitive procurement. If ITS' review confirms the sole source, then a Sole Source advertisement is issued, giving other Interested Parties an opportunity to identify competing products and/or services. Based upon the results of the Sole Source advertisement, ITS will either certify the request as a sole source or conduct a competitive procurement.