The Academic Technology Committee recommends that Palomar College shall have a Digital Information Literacy Assessment in place by Fall, 2015 campus-wide to coincide with SP3, Student Equity Plan, and the Student Portal. The recommendation is to implement the Northstar Literacy Exam (https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org), specifically the Basic Computer, the World Wide Web, and Windows 7/Mac OS X modules.

1. **BACKGROUND:** The Academic Technology Committee conducted a study to address Digital Information Skills; as a result, the committee identified a number of Issues that impact student success: Digital Divide, Ongoing Preparedness, Identification of At-Risk Students, Setting Entry Standards for High Schools, and Meeting Accreditation Standards for DIL and Ongoing Preparedness. The committee determined that Palomar College needs to be proactive in assessing incoming students for technology skills as well as provide remediation. The Committee also listed the necessary technical skills required to complete classes successfully, which included basic computer, Microsoft Office, and Internet skills. As a result of a meta-analysis of existing published tests, Northstar was selected as the best assessment tool.

2. **The NORTHSTAR SOLUTION:**
   The Committee voted to approve the Northstar solution (https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/).
   i. The rationale is that it is national, grant-funded, modular, and scalable. Northstar processes 4 – 8,000 tests per week nationally.
   ii. The basic computer digital literacy standards and modules cover eight main areas: Basic Computer Use, Internet, Windows Operating System, Mac OS, Email, Word Processing (Word), Social Media, and Excel. (Northstar has recently added new modules, which indicates that this instrument is continually evaluated and updated. Also, note that the institution can select which modules are included in our assessment.)
   iii. Field Tests: Two Academic Technology Committee professors conducted field tests with their classes to evaluate the ease of use and feasibility to implement Northstar at Palomar College.
   iv. **COSTS:**
       a. The testing itself is free to students, who can receive a certificate or badge of completion upon passing the modules.
       b. In order to become a “sponsored” site and brand the test to Palomar College, there is an annual fee of $1,200.
       c. To avoid a labor-intensive solution of student reporting and/or processing the free certificate at Palomar College, the Committee
recommends transferring the test scores directly to our PeopleSoft system. There are two ways to accomplish this:
1. The latest version of PeopleSoft can connect directly to NorthStar with no extra charge. However, we do not have the latest version, and Palomar’s PeopleTools has no firm update schedule (approximately 2 years from now is projected).

OR....

2. Approximately $20,000 for the SOA Gateway (Service-Oriented Architecture Security solution) to transfer the payload from the current web gateway to our legacy PeopleTools component of PeopleSoft.

3. IMPLEMENTATION. Options:
   i. Assessment Day battery of tests. Official results will appear with other assessment results.
   ii. Incentives such as 1-credit as part of registration.
   iii. Included in the First Year Experience and TLC.
   iv. Remediation can be identified through existing classes on campus, DRC, CSIS, Business. Students will automatically receive a list of recommended and/or required courses they would need to complete based on their Northstar test scores.

4. K – 12 ALIGNMENT. Based on conversations with instructors from North County and Valley Center School Districts, they tell us that they are looking to us to set the standards they will teach. As they prepare students to achieve the standards in Northstar, then we will have increasingly prepared incoming students.

5. CTE. Industry Advisory Boards recommend that Palomar College prepare students so that they exit with high-level digital information skills.

6. ACCESSIBILITY: An issue to consider is to accommodate students who need assistance to complete a technology assessment. Sherry Goldsmith verified that this assessment is not acceptable because it is a mouse-based graphical interface. (Our meta-analysis did not find any assessments of technology skills that were not mouse-based.)