

**Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
August 8, 2022**

**Approval of 5450 Palo Perimeter Firewall and M700 Appliance Upgrade
A Recommendation**

1. **Division and Department:** Chief of Staff, University Technology Services
2. **Introduction:** In 2017, Oakland University (University) engaged in a budget approval process with Cabinet to secure funding to upgrade the perimeter firewall environment for housing and main campus. As a result of Request for Purchase (RFP), Palo's model 7050 firewalls and M500 Management Appliance were selected and purchased through Nexum based on anticipated network growth projections provided by our Internet Service Provider, Merit Networks. The growth rates were calculated from historical utilization reports compared to projected growth rates for increased utilization for research-intensive computing needs and the expansion of student housing. Since 2017, Oakland has experienced a more moderate network growth rate.

The 7050 firewalls are end of life in the year 2022 for software updates, and we are no longer eligible for code version upgrades. This does not allow us to leverage new functionality and implement the current security protocols. Monitoring the utilization levels for the past 5 years, and with recommendation of Nexum and Palo, the team has decided to scale down the hardware during this cyclical refresh to the Palo model 5450 hardware and M700 Management Appliance environment. This also helps realize a significant cost savings.

Oakland University has been using Nexum professional services for multiple years to implement various networking and security projects. They were selected for these 5450 and M700 purchases based on their professional services and engineering support as a network and security solutions expert with experience installing, configuring, tuning, and cut-over success with perimeter firewall projects. The team has evaluated Palo offerings from Merit Networks. That contract does not provide us with the professional services hours we need to support the project and was a higher cost overall. The key aspect of this selection is the experience and knowledge of Oakland's network and security posture. The other aspect is that our proprietary vendor, Palo, will not unbundle the hardware and software license sale from our existing support. This creates an issue as Tier 1 support was purchased through Nexum as it provided a significant cost savings over purchasing directly from Palo. Since this is an existing environment for the Datacenter firewalls, creating a separate process for support on the perimeter is not cohesive to support a security environment. Deviating from this model would create significant challenges as support would be split between 2 vendors and any future tickets would need to be opened concurrently and coordinated with both support sources.

The proposal provided Oakland University (University) with an early renewal, 3 year pre-pay incentive and trade in credit for the 7050 environment totaling \$242,708.82 and M500 \$15,000 early renewal credit. Recognizing a total cost savings of \$460,817.00 over 3 years from the 7050 and M700 firewall environment.

3. **Previous Board Action:** None.

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4. **Budget Implications:** Funding was approved by President's Cabinet for the amounts noted for planned spend in FY23 with accrual schedules to support FY24 and FY25. Budget has been identified by the Chief Financial Officer.

5. **Educational Implications:** The proposed solution will effectively mitigate security risks with unsupported and end of life hardware and software at the network border.

6. **Personnel Implications:** None.

7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** Proposal developed by Chief of Staff and University Technology Services.

8. **Recommendation:**

RESOLVED, that the Chief of Staff is authorized to negotiate and execute a 3-year pre-pay purchase with Nexum for Palo 5450 firewalls for \$1,074,131.18 and M700 appliances for \$128,940, totaling \$1,203,071.18; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Chief of Staff and University Technology Services is authorized to negotiate and execute purchase orders to purchase Palo 5450 firewalls and M700 appliances from Nexum not to exceed \$1,203,071.18 for FY23 in July, 2022 with accruals to support annualized license and support fees for FY24 and FY25.

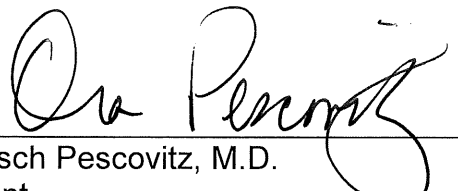
9. **Attachments:** None.

Submitted to the President
on 08/02, 2022 by



Joshua D. Merchant, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and
Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Recommended on 8/2, 2022
to the Board for approval by



Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President