

VETO 26

For: Unproven IT-ology Coursepower Project

Taxpayer Cost: \$200,000

Background Information:

- The Coursepower project has a number of other public and private partners, including Blue Cross/Blue Shield, cyberwoven, the Midlands Education and Business Alliance and truematter.
- While creating an Applied Computing minor is a worthy endeavor, industry that desires this enhanced capability of students should help support continuing the endeavor. Additionally, only two of the four Midlands schools currently involved in the project are public schools. Four current Coursepower schools are USC, Midlands Tech, Benedict and Columbia College.
- The Coursepower Project received \$400,000 in the 2014-2015 budget, and an additional \$100,000 grant from the Department of Commerce in 2015. The Governor vetoed the \$400,000 award in 2014-2015.
- The Department of Commerce has grouped Coursepower with the Innovation Grant award winners and requires a certain level of reporting, but Coursepower should have been part of the grant competition, as opposed to being a separate line item.
- The Coursepower Board is largely made up from representatives from the private sector, and it has been successful thus far in obtaining private funding (having raised \$300,000 to date of the \$400,000 required in the FY14-15 award, with verbal commitments for the remaining \$100,000).
- The additional \$200,000 in funding for FY15-16 was requested for the program to be expanded beyond the Midlands, but there is no real data as to the success or impact of the program in the Midlands. Perceived success of the program is largely anecdotal. It is unclear as to the sustainability of the program, apart from state funding.