

Unity College Information and Technology Strategic Plan

June 9, 2010

Executive Summary

In February of 2009, the Information And Technology Strategic Planning Task Force (hereafter, TF) was charged by Vice President of Academic Affairs Amy Knisley to: “develop the vision, goals, and priorities that will provide the groundwork for a strategic information and technology plan. The visioning taskforce will lead processes to establish 1) college-wide understanding of how information and technology support the college mission, and 2) broadly-shared agreement as to the vision, goals and priorities of information and technology at Unity.”

To that end, the TF utilized information gathered in a preliminary survey by consultant Bill Wells. A timeline was developed. The TF and the campus community engaged in a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). Further information was gathered via online surveys and faculty meeting discussions. Goals, objectives, and strategies were developed. The following top priority items emerged:

GOAL A. Develop, implement, and maintain an information and technology infrastructure that meets the needs of the campus community and anticipates future needs.

1. Develop classroom design which supports technology that enables contemporary instruction methods
2. Campus users will be able to access applications and data remotely.
3. All applications will be updated on a semester rotation, with additional updates as requested/needed.

GOAL B. Develop, implement, and maintain sustainable practices and technological solutions.

1. Create a campus-wide educational program for teaching about sustainable computer use practices
2. Adopt paper-saving policies and procedures for paper use
3. Replace all inkjet printers with laser printers
4. Adopt energy saving practices in all classrooms

GOAL C. Optimize campus-wide communication; Develop, implement, and maintain technology that will enable collaborative decision making campus wide functionality and a seamless flow of information.

1. Establish processes for determining standard hardware and software package options for all college-supported computers
2. Establish requirement for every student to have a computer.
3. Evaluate upgrade/replacement to improve student information system/learning management system (e.g. CAMS) functionality

The TF affirms the need for ongoing and regular review of the plan so as to keep pace with the changing needs of the campus and evolving technologies.

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Preamble, from the 2006 Unity College Strategic Plan, Prioritized Strategies:

"Establish and support a faculty development program that emphasizes methodologies, including problem-based learning; use of technology to assist teaching and learning; and reading, writing, critical thinking, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning across the curriculum."

Information And Technology Vision Statement

Unity College envisions an interactive academic community that will allow students, faculty and staff to flourish in an environment where ideas are developed and knowledge is shared.

This interactive community will be enabled by a supportive information technology environment that creates a cohesive college community fostering preparation for meaningful work in environmental stewardship. The effective use of technology provides seamless integration of information and communication among all areas of the college and the global community. Excellence in campus-wide information and technology will position Unity College to graduate students who can actively engage with and constructively shape the world in which they live.

Task Force Members

Bill Morgan, *Director of Information Technology, Co-Chair*
Melora Ranney Norman, *Director of Dorothy Webb Quimby Library, Co-Chair*
Alisa Johnson, *Administrative Staff*
Emma Creaser, *Faculty*
Erika Latty, *Faculty*
Kathleen Dunckel, *Faculty*
Kevin Spigel, *Faculty*

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GOAL A. Develop, implement, and maintain an information and technology infrastructure that meets the needs of the campus community and anticipates future needs.

- All applications will be updated on a semester rotation, with additional updates as requested/needed.
 - Identify functional user groups, and clone those machines to serve that group's needs.
 - Identify user groups
 - Group them together by classroom and/or location (e.g. Koons rooms, Library, Admin).
- Campus users will be able to access applications and data remotely. The necessary number of licenses will be reserved for classes that need them.
 - Implement virtual applications.
- Develop classroom design which supports technology that enables contemporary instruction methods
 - iClick: Use it in a classroom to take immediate status update on students--multiple choice, and they use it to choose a b or c, use to identify their understanding
 - Easily combine media into one presentation format to show students so that not clumsily switching between media: (CD, DVD, Power Points)
 - Smartboards so that we both project and write on the smartscreen (eliminates awkward efforts to write on chalkboard on either side of the screen)
 - Ability to record lectures (integrated w/smartboards)
 - Ability to monitor all PCs in the classroom
 - Want to be able to record a visual/audio lecture that can be uploaded from home and viewed by students at campus (CAMS or other platform).
 - Spaces that can accommodate small groups: Room format choices (dedicated small group rooms, dedicated lecture, dedicated circle, etc.)
 - Podium with wires, computer screen, etc. built into them (lecture rooms only)
 - Separate faculty-only monitors in rooms (built-in lectern)
 - Standardized projectors, remotes, wireless mice, etc. configured so that adjacent classes are not inadvertently affected
 - Wireless
 - Ability to black out screen
 - GIS and other specialized labs; Double monitor helps students keep track of their methodology on one screen and the graphics work on the other.
 - Large print scanners and plotters available to GIS and Photo Lab.
 - Overhead and digital opaque projectors integrated into teaching stations.
 - Ability to attach tools (e.g. microscopes, scales) to computers so that data can be saved and projected.
 - Lab computers will be protected from chemicals, spills, splatters, etc.
 - Ability for students to write or create other digital presentations and/or web products in-class and to share their work for peer review.
 - Encourage paperless submission of work.

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- E-portfolios that are customizable by students
- Printers strategically located to serve groups of instructional spaces
 - Have classrooms and labs with teaching stations mounted in appropriate locations with laptop friendly furniture.
 - Ensure all new facilities are designed to meet this objective (phones in each classroom = security feature)
 - Develop support for specialized technical equipment that supports curriculum needs
 - Implement uniform software for each constituency
 - Implement college-wide plagiarism software service
- Create computing lounges for students in academic buildings with people-friendly atmospheres and ergonomic workstations
 - configure the space to include more PCs and round tables
 - hire work study students to oversee the lab during early morning and evening hours
 - propose an open computer lab space in the new science building
 - Implement card-swipe or keypad technology for selective, secure access for all instructional areas
- Create technology equipment areas for faculty and staff (e.g. scanners, color printers, fax machines) in buildings
 - Replace photocopiers with multifunction machines
 - Establish one videoconferencing-capable room that is not scheduled for a regular class
 - Confidentiality and security (e.g. swipe cards or pins @ centralized printers)
- Staged evolution of the library toward Information Commons (see Appendix)
 - Install a computer classroom/lab in the Library that is available for single groups, information literacy/library instruction, and/or classes to schedule (not scheduled for regular classes)
 - Establish small group workspaces with computer access in the Library
- Ensure data integrity and accommodate growing needs.
 - Establish a process to continually assess and determine digital storage needs.
 - Continually assess backup space and frequency.
 - Educate campus users about existing storage space limits.
 - Establish a process defining who is eligible to request more space and how persons who need more space may apply for it.
- Establish a process for proposing, assessing, and implementing new technology solutions on-campus
 - Establish a committee that will help keep on top of new developments in educational technology
 - Include representative liaisons
 - Establish protocols for evaluation & implementation

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GOAL B. Develop, implement, and maintain sustainable practices and technological solutions.

- Create a campus-wide educational program for teaching about sustainable computer use practices
 - Handout for acceptable practices and guidelines, sustainability practices on campus for new students.
- Document and maintain sustainable I & T practices, policies and procedures
- Adopt paper-saving policies and procedures for paper use
 - Give students an initial printing quota, above this limit students pay per page
 - Encourage and support paperless alternatives to course delivery
 - Replace all single-side printers and make double sided printing the default setting where possible
 - Implement advertising and sustainability campaign
- Implement appropriate online testing software etc, give instructors "notepads" to facilitate essay grading.
 - Set default to draft quality
 - Teach how to print multiple pages on one sheet
- Replace all inkjet printers with laser printers
- Recycle equipment in an environmentally responsible way
- Adopt energy saving practices in all classrooms
 - Implement and use software to collect data on energy consumption for reporting purposes.

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GOAL C. Optimize campus-wide communication; Develop, implement, and maintain technology that will enable collaborative decision making campus wide functionality and a seamless flow of information.

- Establish processes for determining standard hardware and software package options for all college-supported computers
- Evaluate upgrade/replacement to improve student information system/learning management system (e.g. CAMS) functionality
 - Improve student class evaluations system
 - Identify and implement technology options to support assessment of student learning
 - Improve assignments submissions
 - Improve electronic grading systems
 - Improve discussion groups/Web 2.0 and inter-student communications options
 - Flexible content organization in learning management system
 - Integrated plagiarism checking
 - Single user login for all applications
- Review existing software packages for their viability and usability
- Establish requirement for every student to have a computer.
 - Establish a process that ensures each incoming student has a standardized computer model
 - Establish a committee to determine student computer/laptop action steps
- Create training programs for the staff and faculty that support the use of standard campus software packages
 - Define job description for a technology trainer position to perform this function
 - Establish, fund, and fill the position
 - Create or make available user friendly instructional guides and tutorials for faculty computer applications (CAMS, CMS)
- Implement processes and procedures for determining and supporting specialized software needs
- Continuously integrate technology into the curriculum
 - Establish instructional technologist position to aid faculty in this function
 - Secure funding for the use of technology in the curriculum
- Establish data security, intellectual property, and privacy requirements/standards
 - Train faculty and staff to ensure implementation
- Plan for bandwidth needs.
 - Monitor/assess usage
 - Educate campus about bandwidth needs and usage
 - Implement the technology necessary to make student and faculty desktops available off-campus

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Appendix

Legend

Goal = A broad statement of what will be achieved.

Objective = Specific, measurable outcomes of the project. In their final form, objectives have a timetable for completion.

Strategies = Work performed in order to achieve each objective of the project.

Action Steps = What will be done? Who will do it? How will it be done? Where will it be done? When will it happen? Activities and tasks do not need to be sequential; two or more may be carried out concurrently. Provide enough detail so that an outsider could understand how to implement the project.

- Objectives
 - Strategies (to attain objective)
 - Action steps (what will be done)

Definitions, Information Commons:

The information commons are often separate buildings within a library complex or a redesigned space within an existing building, providing a range of resources similar to those already in many libraries including room booking, word processing, printing, communication software, and access to licensed databases (Cowgill, Beam, & Wess 2001). Commons are bright, welcoming and open spaces.

Two characteristics distinguish information commons as a physical space from other types of computer access in libraries. Information commons are a space where patrons are encouraged to stay and work for long periods of time, often collaboratively, and reference and technical departments work together to create integrated reference and information assistance to patrons (Bailey & Tierney 2002; Beagle 1999; Halbert 1999). Information commons stress the need to integrate these services in the organization to cope with increased demand for librarians to have advanced reference and IT skills, and to answer questions that are of a different nature to those traditionally asked in reference situations (Beagle 1999).

from: <http://conferences.alia.org.au/alia2004/pdfs/bradley.f.paper.pdf>

According to the authors of the book Transforming Library Services through Information Commons (by Bailey and Tierney, published by ALA, 2008), an information commons is: "... a model for information service delivery, offering students integrated access to electronic information resources, multimedia, print resources, and services.