

ITS Annual Report: Talking Points and Institutional Effectiveness Statements

July 27, 2010

Contact: Gloria Thornton

This extract from the ITS Annual Report 09-10, highlights some important ITS activities for 09-10, especially as they related to the UNCG Strategic Plan for 09-14 and our University's core values. It also includes "Institutional Effectiveness" highlights which demonstrate ITS's commitment to continuous improvement in support of our University clients.

Annual Report Section 1: Activity Highlights

- **(Internal/Transparency/na/na/na):**

- **Campus-wide ITS Project prioritization, project sizing, implementation supporting alignment with Client-driven academic and business needs.**

- During 09-10 fiscal year, ITS worked with the Administrative Systems Committee (ASC) to create a technology project prioritization process that better aligns staff resource commitments with client academic and business needs. Under the new project prioritization process, an allotment of project resource hours is made available for ASC highest priority and divisional priority work at the beginning of the fiscal year. Resource hours are allocated to projects by skillset and tracked across the year. Using the new process, hours from appropriate ITS resources were made available for more than 50 ASC/divisional project priorities. ITS also committed significant time to development of the TimeTrack project reporting system to enhance visibility of and access project effort reports and statuses.

- **(External/Collaboration, Sustainability/SA1/G1.7/Research & Teaching):**

- **Provide network expansion in support of distance learning and research for faculty and students;**
and

- **(External/Collaboration/SA4/ G4.1, 4.4/Research):**

- **Complete the Greensboro metro fiber loop that extends the high performance/high availability campus network to remote locations including Gateway Research Park South Campus and downtown.**

- Completion of the Greensboro metro fiber loop enabled extension of the UNCG campus network to the Gateway Research Park South Campus, and to large research units located in

downtown Greensboro, providing more robust and reliable connectivity back to the main campus and to the internet overall.

- ITS developed multiple redundant pathways to the internet over new fiber infrastructure owned by UNCG, via the North Carolina Research and Education Network's (NCREN) Regional Points of Presence (RPOP's) on South Florida Street and South Elm Street downtown.
- UNCG became a full member of Internet2, the nation's leading consortium for the development and use of advanced networking technologies, in early 2010. The many benefits of membership include access to Internet2's high-performance network.
- As a result of these efforts, UNCG now has essential redundant connectivity to the North Carolina Research and Education Network (NCREN), Internet2 national research and education network services, and commodity internet services. This level of high performance/high availability internet connectivity is critical for development and expansion of on-line and distance learning initiatives, and for support of research efforts that require enhanced, high performance network connectivity.
- Additional network expansion work began on campus in Spring 2010, with the expansion of wireless network coverage within the Residence Halls. This initiative will result in the availability of full UNCG wireless network service in the twenty-one student Residence Halls, providing important benefits to UNCG students who live on campus. In addition to providing traditional high speed wireless internet connectivity, this initiative will fully connect resident students to the campus wireless network from their room. Resident students will be able to roam seamlessly across the campus from one location to another without losing their wireless connection or having to connect to different wireless networks in different locations. Wireless service across the campus will be consistent from residence halls, to classrooms, to the library, to common areas such as the Elliott University Center. Resident students will be able to fully access all of the campus technology services provided over the UNCG wireless network directly from their room. This initiative is expected to complete in mid-August, 2010, with the new service available when resident students move in for the fall semester.

- **(External/ Collaboration, Sustainability/na/ na/na):**

Continued support of email outsourcing pilot (iSpartan email for faculty/staff) , with possible launch of campus-wide migration

- Following the successful August 2008 launch of iSpartan (Google) student email and a successful 08-09 staff email pilot within ITS, a decision was made in Fall 2009 to proceed with a campus-wide opt-in for faculty/staff interested in migrating to iSpartan email (UNCG's implementation of Gmail services). As of late June 2010, 1,215 faculty and staff had moved to iSpartan. ITS also completed implementation of the Google Message Discovery email archiving solution.
 - Building on the success of UNCG's student email migration to Google, UNCG has continued to work collaboratively with Google and other universities in the development and implementation of Google Apps for Education (GAFE) services. An ITS staff member represents UNCG on the GAFE Customer Advisory Board, and ITS provided leadership in forming the North Carolina Google Apps for Education (NC GAFE) Users Group – a group of technical representatives from public and private institutions who work collectively on GAFE implementation and support issues.
- **(External/ Collaboration, Transparency, Sustainability/na/ na/na):**
Complete design and implementation of Microsoft Active Directory and the General Computing Network (AD/GCN) to enhance technology services and security, and to improve operational efficiency and cost effectiveness.
 - ITS continued efforts to migrate the campus from the Novell network to the new Active Directory/General Computing Network in an effort to provide better service and security while reducing the costs of maintaining multiple computing platforms.
 - In fall 2009, ITS moved itself plus 4 other University departments who run "call centers" to the new AD/GCN environment. ITS then focused efforts on support of Windows 7 in the new AD/GCN environment.
 - In Spring 2010, support for the new Windows 7 operating system was first made available to the campus when several finance-related departments from Business Affairs were successfully moved to AD/GCN with Windows 7.
- **(External/ Collaboration, Sustainability/na/ na/na):**
Complete the campus Voice over IP (VoIP) implementation to provide enterprise voice services to campus in a cost effective, sustainable manner.
 - In 09-10, all campus units were moved to the University's Voice Over IP (VoIP) system, which allows UNCG to effectively leverage its existing investments in network, fiber, data center and telecommunications closet infrastructure to provision voice services in the most

cost effective way. Prior to implementation of VoIP, Telephone Services was losing more than \$200K annually in providing Centrex based voice services to UNCG faculty and staff through AT&T. Continuing the existing Centrex service model without transitioning to VoIP would have resulted in a complete depletion of reserves within 10 years, leaving the University with no resources to refresh voice services infrastructure. Implementation of VoIP provides a sustainable long-term model for supporting the continued delivery of cost-effective voice services to UNCG without raising basic voice service rates, and replenishes voice services reserves in preparation for the next infrastructure refresh cycle.

- **(External/ Collaboration, Transparency, Sustainability/na/ na/na):**

- **Begin Phase II Campus-wide Hardware Procurement Program (CHP) to offer increased discounts for University printer and peripheral purchases.**

- In 09-10, the focus of this effort changed from printer/peripheral discounts to the launch of the UNC System Combined Pricing Initiative (CPI) to secure even better pricing and services for PC procurement by combining purchasing power across the UNC system. UNCG ITS provided leadership for the UNC CPI Task Group.
 - Computers with discounts negotiated through the UNC-System CPI are expected to be available for purchase through UNCG's CHP program in late summer 2010.

- **(External/ Responsibility, Transparency /S4/na/Research):**

- **Work closely with faculty research representatives to identify survey tool needs and identify a possible University-wide solution**

- ITS provided leadership and funding for acquisition of a web survey tool that will facilitate the University's success as a High Activity research institution. Working in conjunction with the Research Advisory Council (RAC), Institutional Research, and the Academic Technology Coordinating Committee chair, ITS completed a product-selection project in which the Qualtrics web survey tool was selected and endorsed by the RAC. The product license has been acquired and implementation is underway.

- **(External/ Sustainability/S4/na/na):**

- **Support Executive Staff's decision to eliminate the paper University directory by enhancing the content and format of the UNCG online directory.**

- In support of the University's focus on sustainability, ITS completed enhancements to UNCG's on-line directory at directory.uncg.edu to include content formerly found only in the in

the annual printed directory. This allowed production of the paper directory to be ceased in 09-10, saving paper and other material resources used in its production. It also allows information previously contained in the paper directory to be updated in a more timely manner, with each University department able to directly update their information as needed.

- **(External/ Collaboration, Sustainability/S1/G1.7,1.1/Teaching):**

- **Expand academic software available to students and faculty through the UNCG Virtual Computing Lab, working with departments to meet specialized use needs as appropriate.**

- ITS continued work to expand the software available through UNCG's Virtual Computing Lab (VCL) at its.uncg.edu/VCL, and increased the VCL capacity by an additional 84 concurrent seats. ITS also responded to client concerns about initial software load times by making technical changes to substantially reduce software load latency for select high-demand software packages. ITS also tested a solution for large file access/storage in VCL, and enhanced end-user documentation on the VCL site. Usage of VCL, in terms of total # of reservations, increased by 463% in FY 09-10 (5,786 reservations) compared to FY 08-09 (1,026 reservations).

- **(Internal/ na/na/na/na):**

- **Implement Identity Finder software to identify and remediate restricted data (PII) issues for University faculty and staff computers.**

- A project to implement Identity Finder was initiated in Spring 2010 with distribution of software to campus network computers, and creation of documentation for clients.
- ITS continues to promote use of the software and remediation of restricted data issues to better protect individual's personal information.

Annual Report Section 3A: Institutional Effectiveness Statements

- In Fall 2009, the University decided to proceed with a campus-wide opt-in for faculty/staff interested in migrating from Lotus email services to iSpartan (Google) email. This decision was made following the successful August 2008 launch of iSpartan for students, which was associated with a <25% increase in student satisfaction with email services; and following a successful FY 08-09 staff email pilot within ITS. As of late June 2010, 1,215 faculty and staff had moved to iSpartan. The transition to iSpartan email for faculty/staff is expected to save the University a modest amount of money, while improving mobile access to email, and providing faculty and staff with more ready integration between their email, calendar,

and other collaboration tools such as Google Docs and Sites.

- In 09-10, ITS completed work to move all campus units to the University's new Voice Over IP (VoIP) system, which allows UNCG to effectively leverage its existing investments in network, fiber, data center and telecommunications closet infrastructure to provision voice services in the most cost effective way. Prior to implementation of VoIP, Telephone Services was losing more than \$200K annually in providing Centrex based voice services to UNCG faculty and staff through AT&T. Continuing that service model would have depleted all funding reserves within 10 years, leaving the University with no resources to refresh voice services infrastructure. Implementation of VoIP has provided a sustainable, long-term model for continuing to deliver cost-effective voice services without raising basic voice service rates, while replenishing voice services reserves for the next infrastructure refresh cycle.

- To improve the Virtual Computing Lab (VCL) service to faculty and students, ITS completed work to expand academic software available to students and faculty through VCL, to increase VCL capacity by 84 additional concurrent seats, to enhance end-user documentation, and to substantially reduce software load latency for select high-demand software packages. Usage of VCL, in terms of total number of reservations, increased by 463% in FY 09-10 (5,786 reservations) as compared to FY 08-09 (1,026 reservations).

- Reflecting the criticality of robust and reliable network connectivity between the University network and the wider internet, ITS completed work to develop multiple redundant pathways to the Internet over new fiber infrastructure owned by UNCG, through the North Carolina Research and Education Network's (NCREN) Regional Points of Presence (RPOP's) on South Florida Street and South Elm Street downtown. UNCG now has essential redundant connectivity to NCREN, Internet2 national research and education network services, and commodity internet services. This level of high performance/high availability internet connectivity is critical for development and expansion of on-line and distance learning initiatives, and support of the University's expanding research activity.