Information Technology Services Goals for 2014-15

ITS provides a wide range of technology services to UNCG students, faculty, and staff. Increasing numbers of UNC system projects and frozen ITS staffing have slowed our ability to respond to Banner development needs but, in other areas, we expect to see significant developments over the next 18 months:

1. **Continued improvements in cost-effectiveness and efficiency in academic & administrative services**
   Though ITS is operating with a total state budget that is 11.5% lower than in 2007-08, we have been able to increase and enhance campus services in most areas. The use of technology also has enabled other UNCG divisions to become more cost-effective; this will be increasingly needed, as everyone’s budget becomes tighter in 2014-15. The Executive Staff has endorsed a proposal from ITS and BAF for a campus-wide initiative on managed print services (MPS), and that will be carried out during 2014-15. ITS has been a leader in the UNC system in collaborative efforts with other campuses that improve cost-effectiveness; these will continue in 2014-15. Also, each of the following will enhance UNCG efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

2. **Expanded learning technology services**
   ITS is expanding our support of learning technology and improving existing services. The Academic Technology Coordinating Committee (ATCC), with support from ITS, is engaged in a Learning Management System (LMS) options study to recommend whether UNCG should stay with Blackboard Learn as its LMS, or move to another product. A decision will be made by June. Starting this Fall, we’ll work with faculty to study UNCG’s options for Synchronous LMS (SLMS) products to determine whether to stay with Blackboard Collaborate, or move to another product. After products are chosen, ITS will engage with clients to identify needed improvements in LMS/SLMS services.

   New areas of service include construction of a “Telelearning Classroom” in Bryan 114, with students physically present in the classroom and joining virtually from offsite. Efforts will include better automation of audio/visual technology, and related services such as video “lecture capture” tools, so faculty can concentrate on teaching, rather than managing technology.

3. **Better use of data for decision-making and accountability**
   ITS is leading a campus-wide initiative on business intelligence and data quality. The Business Intelligence Steering Committee will address areas of focus (in 2014-15, Enrollment Management and the upcoming Capital Campaign) and data issues, such as consistent data definitions.

4. **New voice service to be developed**
   A 2014 project will study alternatives that meet expressed needs for communications services. Software-based communications services may replace standard desktop phones for some faculty/staff. By February 2015, we expect to have developed a new voice service program that would, by August 2015, provide the same reliability as the current service, but at lower cost.

   *The timeline for goals 5-8 is shown on the separate roadmap.*

5. **Strengthened wireless network & increased number of mobile applications**
   In the last five years, UNCG has seen an explosion in demand for wireless services. In September 2008, the average number of users on the UNCG wireless network between 8am - 6pm was 1,310. In May 2013, the average number of users was 7,100 (442% growth).
During Fall 2014, ITS will complete a number of initiatives to improve wireless services. These include upgrading existing links to NCREN (our Internet service provider) from 1 Gigabit to 10 Gb, increasing our bandwidth commitment to NCREN to Research Tier service, completing upgrades of the campus network to enable 10 Gb throughput, and increasing bandwidth limit thresholds for wireless networking from 700 Mb daytime/850 Mb evening to 7 Gb daytime/8 Gb evening. Once upgrades are complete, users can expect to see 3 – 4 times increased density in wireless access point coverage and a tenfold increase in average wireless network speeds.

To expedite UNCG’s transition to a more “mobile friendly” web presence, ITS is developing a mobile site template. In 2014, UNCG site owners will be given tools and training to allow them to create mobile versions of their websites. ITS then will work with the Internet Oversight Committee to develop a framework for the University website that will eventually eliminate the need for separate mobile code. ITS is also enhancing the UNCGmobile app by adding new functionality via mobile web sites and development of new mobile applications. One will allow students to view a map of their current building and find the least congested wireless access point.

6. **New data storage options will be available**
   Today, UNCG faculty, staff, and students each get 5 Gb of network file storage space on storage area networks housed in the data centers and 30 Gb of storage space available via Google Drive. ITS is currently piloting Box (www.box.com) cloud-hosted file storage services. If the storage pilot is successful, ITS expects to offer 50 Gb of individual storage space via Box by Fall 2014.

7. **Secure computing environment**
   ITS is developing a secured, encapsulated environment for administrative users to access and process restricted data. This will permit ITS to loosen restrictions on the general computing environment.

8. **Moving more computing to MyCloud**
   As part of our 2013 Value-Added Computing strategy, ITS is moving toward device-agnostic desktop computing services. The UNCG MyCloud initiative will build and deliver virtual desktops and software applications that run on servers in the campus data centers, separate from the end user device. MyCloud services will enable faculty, staff, and, eventually, students, to access their files and University-licensed software applications on a wide variety of Internet-connected computing devices, including Mac and Linux workstations, tablets, and smartphones, anytime, anywhere. MyCloud services are currently available in the ITS Superlab and through mycloud.uncg.edu. Full launch is expected by year-end.

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