To: The Board of Trustees

From: Dave Baird
Vice President for Information Technology & Chief Information Officer

Date: August 22, 2014

Subject: Information Technology Services Goals for 2014-2015

Wesleyan 2020 Goals:

1. Energize Wesleyan’s distinctive educational experience
2. Enhance recognition of Wesleyan as an extraordinary institution
3. Work within a sustainable economic model while retaining core values

Major goals for the coming year are outlined below, together with their relationship to the three overarching goals detailed in the “Wesleyan 2020” framework for strategic planning. These are followed by a partial listing of other significant projects, both new and continuing, within Information Technology Services.

Major Goals and Initiatives

1) Enterprise Wireless Network Upgrade

(Ties to goals 1,2,3)
In the spring of 2013, ITS completed the upgrade of the aging campus core wired network, and began to evaluate options for upgrading the campus wireless network. The existing Cisco wireless network is eight years old and lacks the capability to provide sufficient bandwidth and coverage to the user community, particularly in academic buildings across campus. A formal RFP (Request for Proposal) process was completed in Spring, 2013 and installation was scheduled for summer and fall, 2014. Phase one, to be completed before the fall semester, will entail replacing all existing wireless infrastructure. During fall and winter, we will expand the number of access points and improve coverage across campus.
2) Technology and Data Security (Ties to goals 2,3)
In collaboration with Amherst, Brandeis, Middlebury, Wellesley, and Williams Colleges, we engaged a security consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive assessment of our network and data security posture in winter/spring 2014. Based upon their findings, we are launching a security awareness campaign to educate faculty, staff, and students on what they can do to protect their personal data and that of the university. This multi-faceted approach will include online video training targeted to job functions, general awareness campaigns via print, web, and social media, and proactive scanning of campus computers to detect and remove Personally Identifiable Information (PII (e.g. Social Security Numbers, Credit Card Numbers, etc)). The security awareness campaign will complement an array of security enhancements to IT systems and infrastructure that are in various stages of completion.

3) Classroom Technology Upgrades (Ties to goals 1,3)
In spring 2014, ITS conducted a thorough analysis of classroom technology funding allocations as compared to institutional need. The analysis indicated that, in part due to budget cuts implemented in reaction to the 2008 recession, as well as construction of new facilities without accompanying increases to the technology replacement budget, current funding levels lag institutional need. Efforts undertaken to mitigate the impact on teaching include extending replacement cycles for computers and projectors, and deferring wiring and podium upgrades. The result is that many rooms lack the technology needed to support creative pedagogy. In fall, 2014, I plan to conduct a complete analysis of all capital computing and operating budgets to assess the institutional impact of reallocating funds from administrative areas to bolster academic computing. A new classroom upgrades strategy and planning document will be produced in the spring 2015.

4) Web Redesign for “Mobile First” (Ties to goal 2)
Analysis of internet traffic reveals a decline in web browsing via computer and a concomitant increase in browsing via mobile devices (smart phones, tablets, etc.). In response, we are working with Communications, Admissions, and other prominent departments to redesign their web “landing pages” to be responsive (mobile-friendly). This involves both significant recoding of web sites within Cascade (our web content management system) as well as rethinking the presentation of content by the owners. Release of the new Wesleyan home page is anticipated in mid fall semester, with additional “tier two” pages to be completed by the end of winter break.

5) Enterprise Document Management (Ties to goal 3)
Following the transition to paperless admissions in 2013-2014, matriculating student “folders” are electronic rather than paper. As a result, previous methods employed by Student Affairs and others for handling those documents must be replicated using an electronic document management system. Following a robust evaluation and selection process in Spring, 2014, we selected DocFinity as a solution for enterprise document management. Students arriving in Fall, 2014 will have all interactions with their deans, academic advisors, coaches, etc. managed using this system. Following this initial implementation, DocFinity will be used to improve workflows in Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and several other offices over time.
6) ePortfolio Replacement (Phase One)  
*(Ties to goals 1,2,3)*

Wesleyan’s “ePortfolio” is perhaps the most heavily used technology that ITS supports. More properly called a “Portal” within the higher education community, it provides authenticated users access to many university systems from a single web page. While it was a pioneering effort when it debuted in 2001, many of the applications within ePortfolio run on very old code that is frequently incompatible with modern operating systems and software programs. Its continued use exposes us to numerous security vulnerabilities, and much of the code is poorly documented, understood and thus onerous to maintain. As a result, we are beginning a project to replace ePortfolio with a modern portal, replete with updated, more supportable applications. This will be a 1-2 year project.

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Additional significant ITS projects for 2014-2015

- Implement new electronic calendar for campus
- Redesign/unify software deployment process for faculty/staff and lab/classroom computers
- Support new Center for Pedagogical Innovation, flipped classrooms, student portfolios
- Implement student and financial aid modules of Data Analytics for Business Intelligence
- Prepare and submit Request for Proposal for campus key-card lock solution