Subject: News from the CIO, April 2025
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To: Rachel Schnepper

Wesleyan University
Information Technology Services

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The Spring Edition

Dear Colleagues:

With the temperature this weekend pushing 80°, it really is Spring and the semester is rocketing toward its end with only 4 weeks until final exams...

In this newsletter:

- A recap of topics from the ITC meeting
- Highlights from NERCOMP 2025
- What's new in AI...
- Cyber security penetration testing and training
- Windows 10 End of Support
- Introducing "Now Assist"
- Workday Student project update
- Your random seasonal lyric

Let's get to it...

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Information Technology Committee

An important part of our governance structure in ITS is our Information Technology Committee (ITC). The ITC's purpose is to advise ITS leadership on proposed projects, priorities, and sequencing. Committee members are also expected to relay information to their respective areas to provide greater transparency and improve awareness of the impact these projects will have across the institution. At our April meeting, we covered the following agenda:

- Workday Student - a project status update and timeline review (Kevin Kane)

- Recent developments in AI - new tools and resources (Rachel Schnepper)

- Next generation wireless - implementing MIST and Point-to-Point solutions (Karen Warren)

- Cyber security - a look back and ahead (Joe Bazeley)

- Exploring the ServiceNow AI agent to improve user support (Erik Quimby)

Copies of ITS presentations delivered at these meetings are available here (Wesleyan login required).

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Collaboration and Career Growth: Highlights from NERCOMP25

Wesleyan sent a record nine participants to the NERCOMP25 annual conference, held this year in Providence, RI—our largest delegation ever. ITS has a longstanding relationship with NERCOMP, with AVP for IT Karen Warren having served on the board for a decade. That tradition of leadership continues as Kevin Kane, Director of Enterprise Systems, was appointed to the board this year.

The NERCOMP conference offers a unique opportunity for those new to higher education IT to experience the collaborative, community-driven culture that defines the field. Wesleyan ITS continues to benefit from strong peer relationships across the Northeast and beyond. This year, two of our colleagues contributed directly to the conference program: Karen Warren co-led a pre-conference workshop on using a consultancy model to address institutional challenges, while Maria Higuera, Associate Director of Student Systems, participated in a panel on how mentorship supports career progression.

In addition to the annual conference, NERCOMP provides year-round professional development opportunities that are increasingly relevant to broader campus topics such as Power BI, data-informed decision making, and onboarding new employees. Anyone at Wesleyan can create a profile and take advantage of these resources—visit www.nercomp.org to learn more and get connected.

What's new in AI….

There have been several new developments in generative AI over the last few weeks! OpenAI's ChatGPT released ChatGPT 4.5, deep research, and 4o image generation (which promptly broke the internet!). Google released Gemini 2.5. and not to be outdone, Anthropic released Claude Sonnet 3.7 and Claude for Education. We appreciate that it is not only difficult to keep up with all these releases, but it can also be confusing to know what you have access to at Wesleyan and what, if any, data privacy protections are included. To make it easier, we've created this handy chart to keep it all straight. We encourage you to bookmark it and check it regularly, as things change quite quickly!

Cyber security penetration testing and training

Wesleyan recently contracted with a local cybersecurity company to have them "ethically hack" our systems. This something most institutions regularly do to identify potential ways that hackers could break into systems so the systems can be patched before anyone breaks in. The exercise demonstrated that our cyber defenses had significantly improved from last year and we have already patched the issues that they found this time around which will make things more difficult for any hackers who target Wesleyan systems. We'll bring them back annually to help ensure that our cyber defenses are keeping pace with the attacks that hackers continue to develop.

We also recently finished up annual information security training at Wesleyan. Among staff, the completion rate was 100%, which is outstanding! The faculty completion rate was 81%, which is really good but leaves room for improvement when the annual training rolls out again in October.

Windows 10 End of Support

ITS desktop support staff have been identifying Windows 10 computers in service across campus and upgrading compatible computers to Windows 11. Non-Windows 11 compatible computers must be retired or replaced before the end of August 2025.

If you believe that you are utilizing a Windows 10 computer for a campus need, please reach out to ITS as soon as possible and Request IT Support so we can assess your computer and advise you regarding upgrade or replacement.

Microsoft has announced that the Windows 10 operating system will reach end of support on October 14, 2025. Microsoft will no longer provide security updates, technical assistance, or software updates for Windows 10. After this date, Wesleyan ITS will no longer support or allow Wesleyan owned and managed computers running Windows 10 to connect to the campus network or authenticate to campus IT services.

Introducing Now Assist: A new way to find the resources and help you seek

The Now Assist AI-powered virtual agent can answer your questions, help fulfill requests and generally point you in the right direction for any topic or subject available in the ServiceNow Service Portal and ITS Knowledgebase. The next time you are seeking an answer, try Now Assist!

We have recently developed and enabled the AI-powered Now Assist virtual agent which can be accessed via the blue icon on the bottom right corner of the ServiceNow Service Portal and also via our WesSupport mobile app.

ServiceNow is the service management platform utilized by ITS, Finance & Purchasing, Payroll, WesCard services, WesStation services, Reslife support, Resources Center services, and Facilities ergonomic & office move requests.

The ServiceNow Service Portal to access these services and submit related service requests is accessed via WesPortal > ITSHelp – WesSupport > Request IT Support.

Workday Student Project Update

We are pleased to report significant progress on our Workday Student project. Over the past several months, the team has successfully completed the Initial Discovery phase, laying a strong foundation for the project's next stages. We hosted a productive Virtual Planning Conference from February 18-21, followed closely by an engaging On-Site Project Kick-Off event from February 24-27.

Since the kick-off, the Workday Student team, comprised of 63 members of the community, have been actively validating the insights gained during the discovery phase through ongoing weekly functional meetings. We've reached a key milestone by successfully building our first implementation tenant, and the initial set of data conversion files have already been submitted to Accenture for thorough validation.

In parallel, prototyping of configurations specific to Wesleyan is well underway, and we have successfully configured the Academic Calendar within our implementation tenant.

Going forward, our focus will shift to several critical activities: loading the validated Wesleyan data into our implementation tenant and conducting comprehensive post-load validations. We will also identify and correct any data discrepancies, confirm the success of our data mapping and conversion efforts, and validate Accenture's configuration prototypes against actual Wesleyan data.

We extend our appreciation to everyone involved for their hard work and dedication, which continues to drive the project forward with great momentum.

Finally, as a reward for reading this far, here is your Random Seasonal Lyric...

As an ode to March Madness, the Wesleyan Men's Basketball team's historic season, and Division III National Head Coach of the Year Joe Reilly, here is an excerpt from Fred Small's 1985 tune "Jimmy Come Lately". It tells the story of a basketball coach who retires after a successful career to settle in the Pacific northwest.

And it's Jimmy Come Lately to Lost Mountain Road
The fog from the bay will be clearing
I'm crossing Dean Creek with a thirty-kid load
And I'd rather be nowhere but here.

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Until next time, please be in touch if you want more information on any of the above or if you have suggestions for future topics, and thanks for reading!

Dave Baird
VP for IT & CIO