2002 IT Strategic Vision

Introduction

The University of Colorado at Boulder’s mission is to lead in the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge through instruction, research, and service to the public. CU-Boulder’s computer and network resources support that mission by providing state-of-the-art IT resources, innovative educational technologies, and an array of IT services and support. The CU-Boulder campus has engaged in comprehensive strategic planning processes that are the keystone of the development of the campus’s IT environment. CU-Boulder’s 1998 IT strategic planning process provided the blueprint for building out a solid, accessible IT infrastructure. The hallmark of this current strategic plan is its emphasis on academic and administrative IT services.

2002 IT Strategic Vision

Over the past several years, technology has been developing at ever-increasing rates; concurrently, faculty, student, and staff expectations of the campus’s IT environment, resources, and their support structures have risen, and will continue to do so. Faculty increasingly rely on robust and effective educational technology tools to enhance teaching and research. Students expect mobility, flexibility, and customization in their use of IT for classes, and in their electronic administrative interactions with the university. Staff desire specific, timely, and accurate information to support their work. Even with the improvements to the campus’s IT environment over the past four years, including increased levels of support, faster networks, and greater access to educational technology, campus users expect ever greater performance from the campus’s computing and network resources. CU-Boulder is responding to these varied expectations by articulating an IT vision that focuses on:

- Educational technology use and support; and student information and IT literacy and fluency;
- Providing integrated web-based IT services to faculty, students, and staff;
- Moving IT support closer to end users;
- Improving the coordination of critical elements of the campus’s IT environment; and
- Improving communication about IT resources to the campus community.

Integrating the components of this vision into CU-Boulder’s academic and administrative IT landscapes will help meet growing expectations of faculty, students, and staff, and will contribute to the “Culture of Excellence” called for in CU President Elizabeth Hoffmann’s Vision 2010.

Key Area #1 – Educational Technology

The IT strategic planning process has made it apparent that each school, college, and department has significant educational technology needs and uses, many of which are increasingly discipline-specific, but concurrently reliant on centrally-managed resources. A robust, centrally-managed technology and support infrastructure—well-coordinated with unit-

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1 Educational technology is the use of existing and emerging media and information technologies to enhance teaching, learning, and research.
2 CU-Boulder defines information literacy as a student’s ability to recognize what information is needed independent of its format, to know where to find it, and to be able to evaluate it and then use it critically and creatively. Fluency comprises those more advanced abilities that may be specific to particular disciplines or groups of disciplines or to higher levels of learning.
specific support structures—can provide faculty and students with critical IT resources they need, such as:

- Advanced instructional facilities;
- Academic digital content;
- A robust learning management system;
- Comprehensive educational technology support, including desktop and facilities support, production assistance, and instructional design support; and
- High performance research computing.

Additionally, initiatives such as Information and Information Technology (I/IT) literacy for students will provide a foundation for discipline-specific I/IT fluency goals. The campus must facilitate departmental level planning to better meet both unit-specific educational technology needs and I/IT fluency goals.

**Key Area #2 - Integrated Web-Based Services**

The web is increasingly the virtual space for the campus community to access information and do its work. Students rely on web-based student services and course content, staff use web-based applications to complete a wide range of business and work transactions, and faculty access online information and digital content in support of their teaching, research, and creative work. The campus must provide web-based services that fulfill a wide range of needs and that are technically, administratively, and culturally integrated. The campus must strengthen and strategically expand current web-based services for students, faculty, and staff. In addition to being able to access financial aid and registration services, for example, students should be able to access personal calendaring, online course materials, and other services through a single, interactive website. These services, and corollary web-based services for faculty and staff require collaborative efforts by several units across campus, including ITS, University Communications’ Office of Web Communications, Enrollment Management Services, and many other units that provide student, faculty, and staff services.

**Key Area #3 - Effective IT Support and Services**

Cross-campus collaboration within a centralized/departmentally-based hybrid IT support model should be a hallmark of the campus’s continued provision of effective IT support. Providing coordinated, targeted support close to the user is the means by which the campus must facilitate effectiveness across areas as diverse as educational technology, facilities, central IT and web-based services, and desktop support. For instance, the campus should continue to develop partnerships between ITS, academic service units, and departmental IT staff to provide faculty with a wide-range of educational technology support—from assistance with course web page design to the creation and management of digital media for teaching and research. In addition to providing effective IT support, the campus should continue to provide excellent central IT services and to expand and enhance those services wherever feasible. The campus must continue to provide a suite of central infrastructure services on which the day-to-day operations of the campus increasingly depends, including, for example, email, security, an enterprise directory, and reliable network and telephony services.

**Key Area #4 - Effective Coordination of IT Resources**

Technological advances and the increasing criticality of security necessitate cross-campus participation and cooperation to ensure reliability of information and effective provision of both central and departmental services. To ensure that all IT resources—including the network, email systems, telephony, and support—are robust, accessible, and reliable, the campus must provide better coordination of critical services, including security, authentication and authorization, directory services, and educational technology support. The campus must centrally manage
some services (such as Enterprise Directory Services, server registration, an incident response system, and software licensing) and coordinate others centrally (such as wireless deployment, antivirus protection, and email filtering). At the same time, the campus must continue to work toward a distributed model of IT support, in which, for example, desktop support is provided locally and tailored to departmental needs, but with the full resources of ITS available centrally.

**Key Area #5 - Effective Communication about IT Resources**

Effective communication is critical for IT resources to be broadly accessible, used appropriately and to the fullest, and supported effectively. Communication from both ITS and the Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Campus Technology (AVCACT) must be targeted and frequent. A comprehensive communication plan ensures that faculty, staff, and students know what IT resources, services, and support are available to them, and where they can access them; that the campus is aware of the appropriate use of academic and administrative IT resources; and that end-users know and understand pertinent information about policies, guidelines, and processes. Effective communication processes using IT resources as a conduit also ensures that pertinent information about critical incidents reaches all end-users.

**Key Area #6 - Effective and Inclusive Leadership for IT**

The Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Campus Technology and the IT Council work with ITS and other IT providers on campus to provide strategic direction for campus-wide IT initiatives. The campus must make this strategic leadership more inclusive by establishing a faculty committee for IT and an administrative IT committee, both of which would address both strategic and tactical issues. These two committees and IT Council must establish stronger communication and working ties with other leadership and advisory bodies on campus, including the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA), the Student Union (UCSU), the United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS), and Staff Council.