Information and Technology Services

Technology Partners: Transforming the University
The tradition of big ideas and real-world thinking at Minnesota State University, Mankato plays out every day in a million ways and it couldn’t be more apparent than in the division of Information and Technology Services (ITS).

To support the University in its endeavor to promote global solutions, think and act like a doctoral institution, grow extended learning, create the campus of the future and embody quality and excellence, ITS has developed an ambitious strategic plan. Our strategic plan will help us set priorities, focus our energy and resources, strengthen our operations and ensure we are working toward these common goals.

The framework of our plan is built on five strategic elements: 1) Student and Faculty Success, 2) Service and Process Improvement, 3) Professional and Effective Staff, 4) Relationships, Partnerships and Communications and 5) Superlative Access to Data. These elements inform our goals and the actions needed to achieve them. They affect every one of our ITS employees on a daily basis as they make decisions and perform their work.

So, on behalf of my ITS colleagues, I’m very proud to present the 2013 ITS annual report. I am excited about the future of technology in education. I believe technology can empower students and faculty to create bold new ways to advance teaching, learning, research and innovation. I believe that Minnesota State Mankato can be a global leader in these areas.

Sincerely,

Ed Clark
Vice President for Technology and Chief Information Officer
Where is ITS?

If you take a look on the third floor of the Memorial Library on the campus of Minnesota State Mankato, you’ll find the server room in plain view. The room, surrounded by columns of thick glass block, is climate-controlled and devoted to the continuous operation of more than 300 computer servers. It’s the University’s data center.

Adjacent to the server room is the Service Desk, where ITS interacts directly with the campus community. There, the Service Desk Analysts can be seen assisting people face-to-face at the desk or the kiosks. They are fielding inquiries and problems via phone calls, email or the online customer portal, servicing administrative, academic and student computer needs.

Beyond the server room and the Service Desk, some 60 ITS staff members do their work and interact in an environment that is flexible and dynamic, changing as needs arise. Technical Services, Academic Technologies, Technology Consulting, Application Development and Web Services, Customer Services and Information Technology Security conduct their business there.

But to think about Information and Technology Services at Minnesota State Mankato in terms of space and location is to overlook the real character of ITS, which is the successful delivery of information technology to its users. So, where is ITS?

- When students use wireless devices to access research journals, ITS is there.
- When faculty engage with partners from across the country and around the world via TelePresence or other types of teleconferencing tools, ITS is there.
- When faculty are able to engage students in real-time using interactive classroom technologies like SmartBoards and student response systems, ITS is there.
• When alumni connect with their alma mater 50 years after graduation because they remain in close communications with the University, ITS is there.
• When we make new courses of study available to learners with limited or no vision through technological innovation, ITS is there.
• When colleges and departments are able to encourage their faculty to explore ways to transform their courses, make them more engaging and improve student learning, all through the creative and innovative use of instructional technology, ITS is there.

These are a few ways that students, faculty, staff and administrators leverage technology through partnership with ITS. In the following pages, you’ll learn more about how ITS works to promote technology solutions to further the goals of the University. You’ll see that information technology at Minnesota State Mankato is really about partnering with our campus community.

Where is ITS? ITS is where you are.
Information and Technology Services serves the faculty, students, staff and alumni of our University. Our mission, vision and values reflect our service orientation and commitment to excellence.

**Our Mission:**
Information and Technology Services positions Minnesota State University, Mankato as a leading institution in student outcomes, teaching, research and service. We achieve this by building partnerships with our campus community, providing knowledgeable, high-quality and courteous services and offering evidence-based, customer-focused and innovative solutions to advance the University’s strategic goals.

**Our Vision:**
We will be innovators and leaders in information and technology services at Minnesota State University, Mankato, the local community and within Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU). As agents of change we will lead the university community with technological innovation, excellence in customer service, superiority in instructional technology and unsurpassed availability of information resources.

**Our Values:**
Communication, trust, reliability, integrity and innovation.
ITS is committed to furthering the mission of the University and to partnering across departments and administrative units to provide the best information technology infrastructure in MnSCU and to be among the greatest in information technology service delivery in higher education in the nation.

Furthering the University’s Mission Through Strategic Action

The Minnesota State Mankato mission statement reads:

Minnesota State University, Mankato promotes learning through effective undergraduate and graduate teaching, scholarship and research in service to the state, the region and the global community.

Our five-element strategic plan is designed to align our activities with the mission of the University and to propel Minnesota State Mankato forward through amazing information technology service and infrastructure. Our primary strategic element, Student and Faculty Success, is supported directly by three other elements: Service and Process Improvement, Professional and Effective Staff, and Relationships, Partnerships and Communications. Underpinning it all is a commitment to the foundational element, Superlative Access to Data, an increasingly critical dimension of our success as a University.
Strategic Element 1: Student and Faculty Success

ITS is committed to student and faculty success; all other strategic elements are, ultimately, in service of this element. By providing a top-tier learning, teaching and research infrastructure that will enhance learning outcomes, improve retention, introduce new, effective teaching models and further our applied research mission across a diverse faculty and student population, ITS is helping to promote global solutions, to think and act like a doctoral institution, to grow extended learning, to create the campus of the future and embody quality and excellence.

Success Objectives

Goal: Execute on faculty development initiatives to promote and integrate effective practices for teaching and learning.

Goal: Develop student support resources on campus for learner-centered uses of technology.

Goal: Explore innovative pedagogical strategies in a range of courses, emphasizing active learning strategies and student engagement.

Goal: In collaboration with other administrative and academic units, build infrastructure to improve student retention from second to third year by 3 percent and five-year graduation rates by 3 percent.
Key Successes

- Developed more than 65 hours of one-on-one faculty training.
- Conducted more than 100 hours of faculty development, reaching more than 200 faculty members.
- Produced online training that was viewed more than 1,200 times by faculty, staff and students.
- Created more than 4,000 Desire2Learn (D2L) courses.
- Captioned 20 hours of media for deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Digitized more than 600 pieces of media for courses.
- Piloted a grant-funded, nationally recognized learning analytics system, MavCLASS.
- Convened the Institute for the Scholarship of Assessment, Learning and Teaching (iSALT) to promote applied research and evaluation of technology interventions in the classroom.
Strategic Element 2: Service and Process Improvement

ITS will help partners across campus to create more efficient business processes and improve services to Minnesota State Mankato students, faculty and staff. By partnering with individual administrative and academic units and improving how we do the business of the University, the ITS division promotes efficiency and effectiveness. ITS also promotes global solutions, grows extended learning, creates the campus of the future and embodies quality and excellence.

Success Objectives

Goal: Enable business process reengineering through use of technology and process improvement techniques.

Goal: Adopt best-practice frameworks for service delivery and improvement.

Goal: Assess ITS service offerings for alignment, providers, cost and effectiveness.

Goal: Implement ongoing customer satisfaction and feedback assessment and implement continuous improvement protocols.

Goal: Define scorecards to assess progress towards strategic goals and service and process health.
Key Successes

- Introduced a Portfolio Modification Process to systematically handle requests for new information and technology services by campus stakeholders through a rigorous review and approval workflow.
- Enhanced the Curriculum Design System (CDS) to support the creation of a comprehensive curriculum map and management system that will aid in student and faculty success.
- Introduced ImageNow, a document management tool with the potential to make a range of business processes more efficient, from enrollment to business services to human resources.
- Implemented a robust training system for Desire2Learn (D2L) support.
- Developed a new service, Mav Visual Productions (MVP), to drive a comprehensive media strategy for our campus.
- Developed a fully-responsive version of the University homepage that meets accessibility requirements and is mobile-friendly and device-agnostic.
Strategic Element 3: Professional and Effective Staff

By promoting a courteous and well-trained staff who are familiar with state-of-the-art technologies and best practices, ITS will provide best-in-class service and support. We will promote diversity among our staff and support the efforts of our campus to create an inclusive, cross-cultural environment that promotes global solutions, creates the campus of the future and embodies quality and excellence.

Success Objectives

Goal: Continue to provide training in best-practice frameworks such as ITIL and Balanced Scorecards.

Goal: Continue to train staff in specific technologies such as MSSQL, SharePoint and cutting edge networking technologies.

Goal: Develop standardized on-boarding procedure for new employees.

Goal: Host workshops for service improvement, alignment and effectiveness.

Goal: Attend and present at national and state conferences to bring current best practices and innovations back to Minnesota State Mankato.
Key Successes

• Achieved greater than 60 percent certification in Level 1 ITIL training.
• Enhanced the skills of our leadership team with two Assistant Chief Information Officers attending the Moore Leadership training.
• Invested in our capacity to support learners with all types of physical and cognitive abilities by empowering a member of our team to become our first certified Technology Accessibility Specialist.
• Developed a series of video tutorials for faculty and staff for our YouTube channel demonstrating how to get started with core technologies and worked with Human Resources to integrate this into their onboarding procedures.
• Integrated effective practices for Information and Technology service management and vision from nationally respected leader, the Gartner Institute.
• Powered faculty-requested, University-wide discussions on learning analytics and cyberbullying moderated by nationally acclaimed leaders in these fields.
• Presented at major national and state conferences including Educause, the Educause Learning Initiative (ELI), the Gateway to Completion conference and the MnSCU IT conference.
Strategic Element 4: Relationships, Partnerships and Communication

ITS recognizes that our relationships, partnerships and communications, within and outside of the division, are essential to our success. In order to further all five of the University’s strategic priorities, ITS will build strong working relationships with Minnesota State Mankato academic and business units; help form strategic partnerships with industry and sister schools; provide an infrastructure for campus safety; and communicate effectively with campus stakeholders.

Success Objectives

Goal: Implement new service catalog and related websites.

Goal: Develop and promote media management and distribution platform, MavTUBE, to enhance the strategic use of media throughout the University and promote the institution.

Goal: Develop and enhance external ITS governance structures for service retirement and introduction of new services.

Goal: Continue to develop Collegiate and Division Technology Director roles and begin strategic planning with the IT Directors within the University and start to align IT with the goals of the institution.

Goal: Build partnerships with external institutions.
Key Successes

- Relaunched the ITS web site, adding a full service catalog.
- Launched and grew MavTUBE and MediaManager, Minnesota State Mankato’s media management and video sharing systems, to house more than 200 videos and more than 100 hours of media featuring academic content, student events, campus celebrations, athletics events, theatrical performances and high-profile campus talks and lectures.
- Established the Software and Data Advisory Committee to drive organizational priorities.
- Invested in collegiate IT strategic planning and implementation with four colleges by co-investing in IT Director positions.
- In collaboration with other university stakeholders, helped to establish partnerships with Normandale Community College, Riverland Community College and Century College, with more to come.
- Released ChimeInCloud.com, a free, cloud-based student response service, which allows students across the state to respond to instructors’ in-class questions using any personal computing device or cell phone.
- Created iPhone and Android apps to support the MnSCU IT Conferences.
Strategic Element 5: Superlative Access to Data

For each faculty, student and staff member the bedrock element of the ITS strategic plan is to provide superlative access to data. By ensuring ubiquitous, high-speed, secure and reliable access to each member of the University community, ITS is helping to increase productivity, power and innovation, and to drive evidence-based decision making, which will create the campus of the future, allow us to think and act like a doctoral institution, promote global solutions and embody quality and excellence.

Success Objectives

Goal: Where and when it would be an improvement, move services to the cloud.

Goal: Improve reliability, security, capacity and speed of wireless data infrastructure.

Goal: Replace core network routers and firewalls to improve network performance and reliability.

Goal: Implement technology to improve use of mobile devices for student learning.

Goal: Streamline and improve business processes and access to information to improve service to students.

Goal: Improve reliability, security and speed of core network infrastructure by replacing, in phases, 270 outdated Cisco Switches.

Goal: Implement analytics dashboards for self-service reporting.
Key Successes

- Moved our core media services to the cloud, leveraging an industry-standard tool, Kaltura, as the backbone to our enriched and growing strategic media services.
- Upgraded the Minnesota State Mankato mobile app, which is now available for iOS and Android.
- Supported major upgrades for a number of other student-centric apps, including the New Student & Family Programs Orientation registration app; the Graduate Studies and Research online app for enrollment application; the Academic Affairs Curriculum Design System; Student Financial Services satisfactory academic progress letters; and the Enrollment Confirmation app.
- Developed a nimble media management system that allows faculty and administrative units to share media content with students using a broad range of devices through our Media Manager tool.
- Improved support and services related to MavAPPS, which provides access to full software applications such as SPSS, Mathematica, Maple, Microsoft Office and other programs on any computer or mobile device as well as access to files on MavDISK and print to MavPRINT.
- Streamlined access to campus and MnSCU tools by successfully rolling out StarID, a single sign-on infrastructure, with broad campus support and buy-in.

- Piloted an initial foray into analytics tools that will allow us to create ad hoc enrollment reports and allow for future data analytics activities that will create a culture of evidence-based practice.
- Replaced 50 switches, which completes year one of six in the upgrade plan.
Our Commitment to Minnesota State University, Mankato

This overview shows the direction and specific actions taken by ITS to promote the strategic direction of Minnesota State University, Mankato. Our goal is never technology itself; our goal is technology applied thoughtfully to solve real challenges and address the real needs of our faculty, students, staff and administrators. The five elements of our strategic plan articulate clear opportunities to facilitate learning, improve processes, and create access to data in ways that improve relationships, partnerships and communication. And through those relationships, partnerships and communications we find new and better opportunities to promote student and faculty success, improve processes and develop our staff to be more effective at meeting the educational challenges of the 21st century.

To make effective progress on all the individual goals and projects within each of these five strategic elements, we have developed or adopted procedures and processes based on internationally recognized best practices. But without the well-trained, dedicated staff to engage with our partners and carry the work forward, this couldn’t happen. Growing the best staff to serve the best University in MnSCU according to best IT practices is how we intend to carry out this strategic plan.

While we’re proud of our progress thus far, we know that much work remains. Regardless of your role in the University community, we need your support to continue to grow the technological infrastructure and services that will help us to promote global solutions, think and act like a doctoral institution, grow extended learning, create the campus of the future and embody quality and excellence. We’re glad we can partner with you on this great adventure.

Find the complete strategic plan at www.mnsu.edu/its/plan/.
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Minnesota State University, Mankato