

## District Office Program Review – Executive Summary (Information Technology Services)

**Unit Title:** Information Technology Services

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### Executive Summary

#### 1. Unit Description.

The Information Technology Services (ITS) department is a centralized service organization dedicated to providing information technology leadership, support staff, training, policies and procedures related to technology, strategies for the effective deployment and utilization of information technology, and assisting the colleges, as directed, with local technology initiatives, projects, and planning.

Functional areas within ITS include:

- Desktop and Media Support
- Administrative Information Systems
- Network Services and support
- Web Services and Support
- Technology Management

#### 2. Describe major accomplishments since last review.

The following is a sample of major projects completed by ITS:

- Upgraded core network switches. Core switches, as opposed to those distributed across a campus, serve as the central hub and entry point for our data networks. ITS replaced aging units with faster, state-of-the-art switches from Cisco Networks. The new units can operate at speeds up to 10Gb in preparation for a planned upgrade to a 10Gb internet connection provided by CENIC, the District's Internet service provider.
- Launched the pilot of the Canvas Learning Management System. The District is participating in the state-wide Online Education Initiative (OEI). Central to this initiative is the implementation of a common Learning Management System, Canvas, across all three colleges. ITS developed the support infrastructure and necessary integration with the Banner Student Information System to launch a pilot in Summer of 2016.
- Upgraded network switches in various buildings throughout the District. In addition to core network switches each district building houses units that directly support desktop computers and wireless access points. There are usually switches located on each floor and/or wing of a building. ITS is systematically replacing switches building-by-building and have completed several at each campus.
- Upgrade and expand wireless (Wi-Fi) network equipment throughout the District. The demand for increased wireless network coverage and the rise in the number of wireless devices

required new and additional Wi-Fi equipment. ITS is deploying the new equipment building by building across all three colleges based on feedback from faculty, staff and students.

- Closed 15,520 service requests from 3/31/2014 to 3/1/2016. ITS maintains system to track requests for everyday help or service. Over the 2 year period ITS, primarily Desktop Support Technicians, responded to and closed over 15,000 requests.
- Replaced and upgraded the telephone system. The previous phone system was over 10 years old at the time of its replacement. Backend equipment had begun to show signs of failure and many of the handsets no longer had working displays. ITS implemented a new system that in addition to providing voice services, better integrates with the O365 Office suite and voicemail system.
- Upgrade the data center uninterruptible power supply and electrical system. Computer systems require “clean” and uninterrupted power to run properly. An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) is designed to condition the electricity powering systems and provide battery back up until a generator can be activated. Without a UPS, systems are at risk from power-related crashes. ITS replaced the UPS and upgraded the electrical breaker that runs most of the IT systems throughout the District. All systems were taken down overnight to avoid potential data loss from unexpected issues.
- Designed, programed and implemented solutions in Banner. The District seeks to continually improve its business processes, which creates the need for modifications to the Banner Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Some of the major Banner projects over the last 2 years have been:
  - Student Success and Support Program Reporting and Processing
  - Affordable Care Act Reporting and Processing
  - Gainful Employment Reporting

### **3. Current state of the Unit.**

An ITS Customer Satisfaction Survey was completed spring of 2016. Satisfaction with services provided was outstanding. Eighty-nine percent of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with overall ITS services. Eight percent were “on the fence”, and only 2% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with overall service. Responsiveness, availability and effectiveness in resolving problems were ranked highest among the areas surveyed.

However, results of satisfaction with the systems ITS supports were varied. The survey asked if 23 different ITS systems met users’ needs. The highest rated systems, those meeting the needs of more than 85% of users:

- WebSmart (96%) – The student/employee internet portal.
- ITS Helpcenter (96%) – The system used to track ITS service requests.
- WebSchedule of Classes (90%) – Presents class schedule data in a web-ready format.

- Email/Calendaring (89%) – Supports @smccd.edu email accounts (MS Office 365)
- Student Email Accounts (88%) – Supports @my.smccd.edu email accounts (Google Gmail)
- Phones/Voicemail (86%)
- Digital Signage (85%)

Systems in the lowest tier, those meeting less than 75% of users’ needs, were:

- WebAccess (74%)
- SARS (74%)
- DegreeWorks (71%)
- Argos Enrollment DashBoard (68%)
- Sharepoint (67%)
- Cell Phone Reception (62%)

#### **4. Action Plan.**

ITS will address the systems with the lowest satisfaction rates through replacement, enhancements and upgrades. WebAccess is already being replaced by Canvas. The migration to Canvas will be complete by summer 2017. An upgrade of DegreeWorks is being planned to take advantage of new functionality and to bring the system up-to-date. The District continues to analyze options for improving cell phone reception at the colleges, but this is highly dependent on working with cell providers.

In Summer of 2016 the District formed the Administrative Technology Taskforce. The Taskforce is charged with defining the ideal characteristics of student-serving systems and recommending enhancements to existing systems and/or new technologies. Systems like SARS and the Argos Enrollment DashBoard will likely be re-examined by the Taskforce.

Bond funding and construction has allowed the District to implement a variety of new systems. The District is currently in the final year of a technology replacement plan. Going forward, we must replace these systems as they age through a comprehensive equipment replacement strategy for computers, printers, smart classrooms, digital signage, network equipment, security systems and other instructional equipment. Funding must be identified and systems prioritized in advance their ends of life. ITS will perform an assessment of the costs for systems replacement and work to identify necessary funding sources.

#### **5. Needs: Equipment, Professional Development, Facilities, Staffing, Research (when appropriate).**

ITS is currently well positioned with respect to equipment, professional development, and facilities. Bond funding has provided a number of key upgrades to wireless access points, network switches and routers and servers throughout the district. Computer labs and classroom systems are also being replaced. It should be noted, however, that many of these replacements are being funded through one-time money and an ongoing funding stream is needed to maintain currency as equipment reaches end of life.

One future need is staffing. The department is staffed to maintain current systems, but it is augmented through overtime and student workers to accomplish large projects like those mentioned above. Much of the overtime can be attributed to bond projects. New projects, particularly those focusing on administrative systems may require additional resources for implementation and ongoing maintenance. A sample of new systems, areas of responsibility and projects includes:

- The upgrade of the Banner ERP system to the “XE” version is dramatically increasing the number of required servers. As the server farm grows, the need for additional technical support grows with it.
- Integration with state-wide initiatives such as the Common Assessment Initiative, the Online Education Initiative, and early alert systems will require additional resources to maintain integration and provide support to a broader pool of users.
- The planned increase in audio visual capabilities and services generated by new buildings will require additional staffing, particularly outside “normal” business hours.
- IT security continues to grow in complexity and urgency. As the risks and threats continue to increase across our network and the internet, the need for a dedicated full-time position titled “Director of IT Security” is absolutely essential. The financial impact and damage to the District’s reputation would be significant. This position will develop and enforce policies and procedures to mitigate security risks and ensure that our workforce is educated about data security risks. This position would interface with the District’s new cyber insurance provider to ensure that terms of coverage are maintained.
- Transitioning from IT-specific to more construction-oriented bond projects will require changes in funding sources for staff salaries. There are a number of partially bond-funded positions. As bond work subsides, there will be a need to transition some or all of individuals’ salaries back to non-bond funding. Likewise, new, bond-funded construction would justify additional funding of some positions