2021-2024 Information Technology Plan

Introduction

Oregon Coast Community College (OCCC) is a public, two-year institution located on the central Oregon Coast in rural Lincoln County. With oversight from an elected Board of Education and regional accreditation through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the College offers a wide variety of educational programs to meet the needs of the students and communities that it serves.

With its main campus located in the South Beach area of Newport, Oregon and with additional centers in Lincoln City and Waldport, OCCC provides many programs and pathways from which students can acquire associate degrees, transfer degrees or professional career technical certificates. For Lincoln County high school students, OCCC provides both an Early College program and dual credit through its partnering school district. The College also offers courses for small businesses through our Small Business Development Center, as well as a wide variety of personal enrichment courses through its robust Community Education program.

OCCC Mission:

At Oregon Coast Community College, we equip students for success by providing educational pathways and supports in response to the diverse needs of our community. Through accessible and engaging programs and a commitment to equitable outcomes, we enrich the economic and civic vitality of Lincoln County and beyond.

Office of Information Technology (OIT) Mission:

The Office of Information Technology strengthens support services and instruction to students by advancing the use of technology in all aspects of the College's operations. OIT is responsible for guiding, assessing, planning, developing, and executing state-of-the-art information technologies.

Purpose of the Information Technology Plan

Technology is a critical part of the day-to-day operations at the College. It serves to enhance student learning and the transmission of knowledge and it supports institutional administrative

and operational functions. This four-year plan, developed in collaboration with executive leadership and college stakeholders, is intended to guide the ongoing development and evolution of technology in support of the College's mission and strategic initiatives. The plan describes targeted technology-related activities from 2021 through 2024 and ensures that the planned use of technology is effectively embedded within the broader campus strategy.

The ITP is intended to be a living document that is reviewed regularly in response to the continually changing higher education environment. Additionally, it helps to inform the IT departmental budget to ensure that OCCC will be able to leverage technology wherever needed to achieve its instructional and business objectives.

Planning Framework

To create the planning framework for its technology plan, the OIT takes into consideration information from a variety of sources. Inputs include information gained through engagement with college leadership and stakeholders, participation in the Oregon Community College Information Technology Association (OCCITA) and review of regional and national higher education-related technology trends. The College's mission and strategic priorities also inform the planning as does consideration of the current network architecture and resource availability.

Opportunities for engagement with stakeholders include attendance at college governance meetings such as the Board of Education or College Council, one-on-one or group meetings with staff and faculty, college committee and monthly all-manager meetings, student focus groups, and feedback at townhall or college-wide events such as In-Service.

Early inputs to this plan included:

• The need for the ongoing, post-pandemic delivery of remote instruction for multiple academic programs across multiple modalities

• The continued integration of new technologies into classrooms, laboratories, and other instructional facilities, creating smart, highly interactive classrooms with the potential for simultaneous instruction to multiple locations.

• The improvement of facilities for Internet or other distance learning academic instruction capabilities (replacement of routers and switches for infrastructure management)

• The completion of ERP migration. The old system, Sharknet, requires the maintenance of a very out-of-date functional level to allow the older software to function. When the migration is complete and the institution is no longer running Sharknet, the College will be able to update its server technology.

• The review of shared services for cybersecurity, continued improvement of network systems,

web technologies, databases, and professional development for IT staff on defensive and offensive cybersecurity.

• The update of the equipment review and replacement cycle plan for all IT infrastructures.

Technology Trends in Higher Education

Because this plan will address key priorities for the use of technology over the next several years, it is important to understand significant trends in higher education's use of information technologies in order to anticipate how to make purposeful and timely decisions to capitalize on these trends. The non-profit association, Educause, provides insights into technology trends in higher education.

Educause 2021 Top IT Issues

RESTORE	EVOLVE	TRANSFORM
#1. Cost Management Reducing institutional costs and increasing workforce effciency	**#1. Student Success** Advancing student support services to help students attain academic and career goals	**#1. Institutional Culture** Contributing to a culture of transformation
#2. Online Learning Strengthening online and hybrid education	**#2. Equitable Access to Education** Providing technologies, support, and policies for diverse users	**#2. Technology Alignment** Identifying and applying sustainable digital strategies and innovations
#3. Financial Health Revising budget models and IT governance	**#3. Online Learning** Progressing from emergency remote teaching to online learning	**#3. Technology Strategy** Developing an enterprise architecture that keeps pace with strategic change
#4. Affordability & Digital Equity Providing increased support for students' technology needs and enabling technology availability	**#4. Information Security** Developing a cybersecurity operations strategy	**#4. Enrollment & Recruitment** Exploring and implementing creative holistic recruitment solutions
#5. Information Security Providing information security leadership	**#5. Financial Health** Partnering to develop new funding sources	**#5. Cost Management** Focusing on digital transformation

Several of these trends, such as online learning, information security, student success and affordability & digital equity, are in keeping with the focus of the IT department and have been relevant in our planning.

Information Technology 2021 – 2024 Operational Plan Goals

As OCCC embarks on the new technology plan, budget constraints and staffing resources continue to be a challenge. In alignment with institutional goals, the following objectives have been established for the IT Department.

Goal #1: Foster innovation and expand academic and student support initiatives Information Technology will support the use of technology to provide an effective teaching, learning and student support environment and provide for an infrastructure that supports future growth by:

1. providing training opportunities to the college community in support of technology currently being used and for future initiatives that enhance the teaching and learning uses;

2. enhancing the infrastructure to support current and future technologies for classroom instruction, student services, and administrative activities to sustain operations and provide for seamless learning environments;

3. ensuring an all-inclusive learning experience that includes updated computers, peripheral equipment, network connectivity, applications, and learning spaces that encourage flexibility and engagement in accordance with budgetary limits;

4. continuing to explore new applications and technologies that could enhance academic and student support functions.

Goal #2: Ensure operational efficiencies for academic and administrative areas
Information Technology will assist with providing technology solutions that will ensure operational efficiencies in support of effective business processes in administrative and academic areas by:

1. assessing the use of technology in office operations;

2. collaborating with constituents in order to provide guidance related to the implementation of new technologies and procedures within the constraints of limited staffing and budgetary resources;

3. researching alternative ways of conducting business that could leverage technology.

Goal #3: Support college growth opportunities
Information Technology will collaborate and support initiatives related to enrollment growth by:

1. encouraging the use of, and providing a clear, straightforward path for students to utilize technology for classwork, both hybrid and online;

2. providing IT resources and technical support services to create new and innovative learning environments;

3. providing training and support where needed, for the use of resources that are available to faculty and students.

Goal #4: Improve training and raise awareness of technologies
Information Technology will optimize training opportunities to continually improve employee awareness of technologies and security. This will be accomplished by:

1. continuing to enhance the knowledge of the faculty, staff, and students to align with industry best practices, particularly around cybersecurity;

2. increasing awareness for training opportunities and resources;

3. collaborating with academic and administrative departments to maintain a consistent approach to highlighting technology initiatives and services.

Goal #5: Manage risk effectively and provide for disaster recovery solutions

Information Technology will continue to provide an environment where users can access data or systems and collaborate securely and will continue to implement strategies that provide for business continuity and disaster recovery solutions. This will be accomplished by:

1. researching best practices for data backup/restore, data security and Business Continuity Disaster Recovery (BCDR) procedures; implement improvements where feasible and raise awareness for BCDR-related activities;

2. engaging with other community colleges regarding BCDR-related activities and maintaining continued involvement in appropriate committees, programs and initiatives;

3. exploring opportunities for using available resources at college locations for BCDR systems.

Key Information Technology Initiatives

The ITP includes the following key initiatives for the Information Technology team:

Cybersecurity Infrastructure

The efforts of bad actors to infiltrate both our network and email are on the rise. Our security infrastructure currently concentrates on the desktop computers themselves. IT will be investigating more network-wide solutions to prevent incursions into our system and will be assessing the financial viability of a shared cybersecurity monitoring resource through Portland Community College. IT will also be exploring cybersecurity-related professional development for its staff and additional training for college employees.

Telecom Infrastructure

OCCC has an older Panasonic VOIP phone system which is coming to its end-of-life. Procedures for identifying and implementing a replacement system are ongoing.

Classroom Enhancements

As the post-pandemic need for both multi-modality and multi-location course delivery continues, IT will be working to identify additional instructional areas where upgrades to technology would provide increased remote instruction capability.

Network Enhancement

The network infrastructure, established in 2009, supports daily campus activities and has grown organically. It provides the physical network interconnects including data exchanges between academic and administrative areas distributed across all college locations and buildings. The fiber plant also supports the campus' telecommunications and building management systems (e.g. HVAC, fire alarms, door access, and security cameras). The original design topology and infrastructure (including a lack of fiber redundancy between buildings) cannot accommodate the rapid expansion of data flows and file transfers to and from the desktop machines and backup systems. A substantial replacement of the network routers, switches and other infrastructure to enhance the topology is necessary.

ERP Migration Completion

Implementation of the College's new ERP has been slow due to a variety of functionality and upgrade challenges. IT will continue to support the implementation process in hopes that there will be resolution and that system stability will be achieved.

Project Approval Process

In order to promote a more coordinated approach to IT decision-making and investments, to ensure that decisions are made in a coordinated and purposeful way, OIT is developing an approval process for new projects. Project approval criteria include

consideration of the proposed project's benefit and need, its anticipated institutional impact, its alignment with the IT technology plan and college strategic goals and its impact on budgeted resources.

Next Technology Plan (2025-2028)

As the College approaches the end of its previous strategic priorities planning cycle, work is beginning on a new set of strategic priorities. The new priorities will help to shape the focus of our 2025-2028 plan.

Potential early inputs to the 2025-28 Information Technology Plan include:
- Providing guidance for a possible new Career Technical Education building, currently in its early planning stages, to support appropriate and forward-thinking technology.
- Continuing to assess the training needs of faculty and staff, to foster a better understanding and awareness of college workflows, security, and industry best practices.
- Evaluating the new ERP system to make sure that its functionality and the support being provided from the Anthology group are aligned with the needs of the College and the success of the students.
- Collaborating with faculty on appropriate classroom technology, keeping future-ready and student-focused design in mind.

About the Office of Information Technology

The Office of Information Technology currently consists of a Director and an Information Technology Support Technician with oversight provided by the Vice-President of Administrative Services.

Resources

https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/11/top-it-issues-2021-emerging-from-the-pandemic

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