

SUMMARY

The convergence of technology and learning is changing the face of higher education in dramatic and sometimes unexpected ways. It is an undeniable fact that the Internet is forcing regional universities into global competition for students. New players from the realm of technology are entering the academic scene, which has traditionally been the realm of universities. Using advanced technologies, for-profit corporations and consortiums are picking the “low-hanging curricular fruit,” leaving the more labor-intensive and less-profitable courses for universities to deliver. SIUC has only just begun to compete. We must bring fresh, innovative approaches to this new market. This document describes one such approach— a partnership between Information Technology (IT) and Library Affairs.

The integration of technology and instruction is at the heart of this IT/Library partnership. In a few situations IT and Library Affairs have been duplicating their efforts. This lack of unity wastes resources, dissipates focus, and diminishes the university's capacity to compete. The partnership will bring together the skills and resources of IT and Library Affairs to create a cohesive, highly focused team capable of providing "one-stop shopping" to faculty seeking support for instructional technology initiatives. An atmosphere of synergy will develop between the two units, enabling both to do together what neither could do apart.

This will be a significant endeavor, as many other universities already understand. It is clear that a true academic computing facility for a campus of this size will require additional investment by the administration in staff, training, and resources. The Campus Computing Project acknowledges the scope and potential of instructional technology at SIUC in this way:

Assisting faculty efforts “to integrate technology into instruction” remains the single most important information technology (IT) challenge confronting American colleges and universities over the next two to three years... (EduCause)

The mission of the partnership— to provide faculty with effective support for teaching and learning initiatives in the classroom and in distance learning technology— can be divided into three goals: (1) to develop a seamless and equal partnership between IT and Library Affairs, so that customers are unaware of organizational complexities; (2) to set the trend for instructional technology for SIUC; and (3) to provide high-quality instructional technology development and support for campus faculty.

A climate of collaboration and seamless support is essential to the success of this partnership. As a first step, IT's Customer Service Center (CSC) will relocate to Morris Library. That move sets the stage for future projects and facilitates further team-building efforts. This relocation will require that new workspaces be constructed at an approximate cost of \$20,000. Further steps in the collaboration's evolution are projected into six-month developmental cycles.

During the first cycle, the team will come together physically in the library, become familiar with each other's talents and resources, and learn to work together. Team leaders will develop a clearer understanding of how to best match faculty needs with the partnership's available staff and resources. Also during the first cycle, a list of additional skills, resources, and accompanying costs will be compiled, as will goals for the second six-month cycle.

Sustained support from the administration will be essential. Several items outlined in this document are traditionally found in academic computing operations at similar institutions. Without additional resources, staffing in particular, it is felt that this group cannot undertake these initiatives. Also, it is imperative that the administration recognizes the risk inherent in

this collaboration. Each unit comes to the collaboration with a recognition of the skills and resources of the other. The effort each unit has taken in order to come together as one entity and the unique talents of each group must be acknowledged. This document addresses the key issues involved in setting up this partnership.

Key Issues

- What are the essential elements of a first-class academic technology operation?
- How can SIUC best leverage its resources to establish a first-class academic technology operation?
- What resources are currently available to this effort, and what additional resources will be required?
- Can/should SIUC provide all of the elements of a first-class academic technology operation, or must some be discarded, postponed, or brought in by a third party?
- What does a Library/Information Technology partnership contribute to this effort that the two units could not just as well contribute separately?
- What are the necessary ground rules for Library Affairs and Information Technology to work together in this partnership?

METHODOLOGY

The methods used to develop this proposal involved several activities.

- First, the authors looked at the current environment and documented the current support activities and assets.
- Second, peer institutions were investigated to determine the practices they have adopted for academic technology.
- Third, the staff members of Information Technology's Customer Service Center, Library Affairs Instructional Support Services, and Systems were consulted. Staff for both units provided input to this agreement.

THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

For the most part, Library Affairs and Information Technology operate independently of one another. Although functions are duplicated in a few situations, those processes are different, and the customer base is vastly different. The two partners in this endeavor are currently heavily involved in a number of instructional technology initiatives.

Current activities

Library Affairs

- Instructional design, web development, custom programming, and access to a number of web course development tools are currently utilized by faculty in over 300 courses.
- Test scoring and statistical analysis are performed both on the mainframe and through the web or e-mail;
- The Library makes available laptop computers, data projectors, digital cameras and other equipment for checkout to faculty for use in instruction;

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- Faculty teaching in Lawson Hall benefit from Library staff in the core area to support their use of technology in these classrooms. Lawson Hall technology was recently enhanced, including new sound and electrical wiring, projection equipment, document cameras, laptop computers, and network connections;
- As funding permits, the Library adds projection equipment and networking to the larger auditoria on campus. Traditional instructional equipment such as overhead projectors and TV/VCRs are delivered to classrooms all over campus for use in instruction;
- Faculty, students, and staff also take advantage of the Library Affairs Seminar series, which offers a variety of technology-oriented short courses, including HTML, PowerPoint, searching online databases, and more.
- Subscriptions and online access to thousands of electronic information resources including journals, indexing and abstracting services, and the statewide, online catalog.

Information Technology

- Single entry point for IT customer problems, questions, and requests;
- “Tier-1” technical support to the faculty, staff and students of SIUC including: Software tools and access to information in the SIUC computer network and the Internet;
- Communication on and off-campus via E-mail, Newsgroups, and the World Wide Web;
- Desktop productivity software;
- Job processing on the mainframe computer;
- Central Unix server administration;
- Technical support for users of the AIS system;
- Management and tracking of customer problems questions and requests from inception to conclusion;
- Administration of problem management system and knowledge base for SIUC; including AIS problem management system for all SIU campuses;
- Paper and electronic documentation and publications;
- Webmaster for Information Technology’s web site;
- Administration and distribution of: Site licensed software, SalukiWare CD, Virus protection software;
- Computer Learning Centers – associated classrooms will have an instructional multimedia workstation with networked PCs for students.

Resources at Hand

Talents

Information Technology and Library Affairs have a number of talented people currently working on various aspects of the above activities. Several staff members hold masters degrees in instructional design, curriculum and instruction (computer based education), library/information science, engineering, and more. Other staff hold degrees in electronics technology, computer science, and various other disciplines useful to this partnership.

Both partners have an outstanding reputation for providing high-quality service to their constituents. The fact that service is at the core of our missions is evident in the type of work we provide. Staff members are dedicated, enthusiastic, and looking forward to this new challenge.

Skills Inventory

The following skills are currently available to this partnership.

Skill	Library	IT
Courseware Tools Support & Administration	✓	
Custom web programming	✓	
Customer Service Techniques	✓	✓
Graphic Design	✓	
Instructional Design	✓	✓
Instructional technology support	✓	
Macintosh OS and client support	✓	✓
Network Administration	✓	✓
Problem Management and Knowledge Base		✓
Project Management	✓	✓
Statistical analysis	✓	
Unix OS and client support	✓	✓
Web Page Design	✓	✓
Web server administration	✓	✓
Windows OS and client support	✓	✓
Technical Writing and Editing		✓

THE FUTURE ENVIRONMENT

The following section describes the future environment in which the partnership will operate. The environment includes the mission and vision of the partnership, potential opportunities, goals and objectives of the partnership, benefits to be derived from the partnership, and opportunities that were dismissed or deferred for future consideration.

Mission & Vision

Mission

The mission of the Library Affairs/Information Technology partnership is to provide effective support to SIUC's faculty, staff and students for the purpose of utilizing technology in the classroom, in distance education and the Internet by combining its resources and bank of available talents.

Vision

This vision reflects our view of the ideal environment for the partnership. It is our *preferred future* and our expression of hope for what the partnership will become. This vision statement is written in the present tense, as though we're looking into the future and reporting on things as they will be.

Desired State

The partnership is perceived by SIUC at large as competent, service-oriented, and effective. The administration has confidence in the partnership and supports it financially, politically, and administratively. The faculty has grown to depend on the services provided and relies on the partnership to aid them in their technology needs. Students ultimately benefit from more

effective teaching and learning, and the partnership has contributed to recruitment and retention by enhancing SIUC's reputation in the marketplace.

Opportunities

Overview of possibilities

Several areas of academic technology offer potential opportunities for this partnership to serve the campus.

- Academic Server Administration
- Desktop Application Support
- Distance Learning
- Documentation
- Graphics/Multimedia Development and Consulting
- Instructional Technology Consulting
- Internet application development and consulting
- Internet II
- PC Maintenance
- Site License Administration
- Training and Workshops on Subjects Related to this Partnership
- Web Course Consulting
- Web Page Consulting and Services

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: To develop an equal partnership between the two organizations where customers are unaware of organizational complexities.

- Objective: Create seamless service environment where organizational affiliation of staff is transparent to the customer.
- Objective: Integrate processes to the point that customers benefit from one-stop-shopping for all their instructional technology needs.

Goal 2: Set the trend for instructional technology for the campus.

- Objective: Identify key components for instructional technology.
- Objective: Determine customer needs and wishes.
- Objective: Determine campus resources (funding for staffing, hardware, software, and training) to support this initiative.
- Objective: Determine reasonable goals based on expectations and resources available.

Goal 3: Provide high-quality instructional technology development and support for campus faculty.

- Objective: Bring together expertise from both organizations to better serve the customer.
- Objective: Develop new services and resources that could not be developed by either organization alone.
- Objective: Identify components of instructional technology and determine what services are currently available.

Benefits

This partnership will allow us to bring together two key organizations on the campus into one service unit to better serve the faculty, staff, and students. These clients will be able to rely on one service point to assist them in defining their instructional technology needs, determining the most effective solutions, and facilitating the completion of their instructional technology initiatives. Clients will be able to come to one central location on campus, discuss their initiatives, and receive the answers and services they need to accomplish their goals.

Through this partnership, team members will have the opportunity to communicate regularly with other people involved with technology. When the team members communicate on a daily basis, collaborate on projects, and confer with one another on problems, there is a synergistic effect resulting in a greater service center than either organization could develop independently of the other.

Opportunities dismissed or deferred

Other Services

Some services currently provided by the Library and Information Technology use up more resources than what they could give back to the partnership.

In order to insure the success of this partnership at the front end of the experiment, it is important to determine which services can be provided and which ones must be either left to other parts of the university to accomplish or must be postponed for later decisions.

Although these services are all part of a comprehensive academic computing operation, there are insufficient resources in this partnership to support them. It is likely that these services could be added to those offered through this partnership if additional resources become available. Items to be discarded include:

PC Maintenance

This function is highly labor-intensive and potentially very diverse. Students come to campus with a wide variety of hardware and software configurations, and there is currently no standardization for faculty and staff workstations on this campus. There is currently no staffing available to even begin to address the complexity of needs these clients may have.

High-Performance Computing

This function has historically been handled by a division of Information Technology through mainframe computing and large scale Unix servers. Needs are currently being handled by divisions that are not part of this partnership.

Statistical Consulting

This function is currently being provided for faculty and graduate assistants on a limited basis through Instructional Support Services, and is devoted primarily to research for teaching. The Statistics Lab through the College of Education has historically provided services for graduate assistants in conducting their research, but it is unclear if this laboratory has funding to continue its existence. SPSS and SAS will be in Computer Learning Centers also, but consulting services will be limited at those locations. It is possible that the services provided through Instructional Support Services could be expanded to support research, but it would not be possible without a substantial investment in staffing.

Internet II

This initiative is currently under investigation by a subcommittee of the Computing Advisory Committee. This initiative does not appear to be within the scope of this partnership.

The Team

While there will be two distinct lines of supervision, the partnership will function much like a cross-functional team. The two organizations have distinct responsibilities for providing services to their individual customers, but the two will come together through the development of projects. As projects are conceived and launched, new development teams will be formed without regard to which organization employs them. As projects are completed, teams will be disbanded and reformed into new project teams. Permanent teams will also exist where functions cross department lines. It is the intention of these teams to provide cross-training and to encourage a collaborative environment among the members of this partnership.

KEY STRATEGIES

It is imperative to the success of this partnership that all members of the team understand that they are important, unique members of the organization. Each person must have an understanding that he/she is valued as a team member, is accountable for his/her role in the partnership, and has the authority to take actions that meet the goals and objectives of the partnership. It is equally important that they have a clear understanding of the mission of the partnership and are committed to its success. These team members must feel comfortable taking risks they feel are necessary to ensure the success of the organization. It is equally important that the supervisors of the team have a clear understanding of the skills and abilities of the team members--and that the supervisors are committed to the notion that having the freedom to develop collaborative environments with colleagues is a healthy and productive way for staff to remain productive and enthusiastic about their role in this partnership.

First Do No Harm

The partners must be mindful to keep doing what each does well, and to avoid a reduction in existing service levels.

Move CSC to Library

As a first step, IT's Customer Service Center will relocate to the rooms now known as the CIRCA 2001 room in Morris Library. That move sets the stage for future projects and facilitates further team-building efforts. This relocation will require that new workspaces be constructed at an approximate cost of \$12,344.28, excluding charges incurred for networking and university electricians. The Appendix shows the proposed floor plan for the CIRCA 20001 room.

Short Planning Cycle

As the partnership evolves, unexpected opportunities and issues will arise. A sensible management approach would be to set goals and objectives and commit to projects on a moderately short planning cycle. Therefore, each six months, the team will develop goals and identify projects that will produce results in a short time. Commitments that will require more than six months to complete will be broken into phases, with any given phase no longer than six months. At the same time, the team will report on its performance for the previous six months. The first planning cycle will be used to evaluate staff on strengths and weaknesses and determine the best approach to fill identified needs and how best to apply existing skills. One deliverable from the first planning cycle will be a detailed list of additional skills and resources required, associated costs and recommended sources of funding.

A mid-cycle checkpoint at three months will be conducted to assess and report progress.

Critical Success Factors

The support solution provided should meet these critical success factors:

1. Provide a comprehensive university-wide solution (Global vs. Local). It must take into account the needs of all departments.

2. Demonstrate a clear understanding of instructional needs.
3. Fit well with evolving University needs.
4. Structure and processes must be transparent to end-users.
5. Metrics must be in place that measure and report performance as well as customer satisfaction.
6. Must successfully identify and provide tools, training, and documentation to support the partnership staff.
7. Must be cost-effective.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ANTICIPATED

Technology

In order to maintain current service levels, it is agreed that the current level of maintenance and replacement of software, computers, servers, etc. will not be reduced. As the partnership evolves, there will likely be a need for additional equipment and software.

Staff

It is agreed that the current level of staff involved in this partnership will not be reduced. Departing staff will be replaced as quickly as possible. Future planning may reveal that additional FTEs will be required to fill certain skills gaps. As stated above, these additional needs will be presented as soon as they are identified.

Skills Gap

These two departments bring to this partnership a rich variety of skills currently utilized, and in some cases, underutilized by their clients. In order to provide the best possible services to meet the instructional technology needs of the faculty, and to support the student body in the utilization of instructional technology in their education, it will be necessary to enhance the skills of existing staff and to hire additional staff with expertise not currently available in the partnership.

Facilities

A prerequisite to moving the Customer Service Center to the Library is to provide office space for the staff. The Library Circa/2001 room must be fitted with new network and telephone jacks to accommodate the additional personnel. Panels and desks or workspaces must be constructed to house existing staff members from the CSC. If additional staff is hired, obviously, additional office space will be required.

Training

It is agreed that the current level of ongoing training of staff involved in this partnership will not be reduced. Future planning may reveal that additional training will be required to fill certain skills gaps. As stated above, these additional needs will be presented as soon as they are identified.

POTENTIAL RISKS

In any merger of two historically separate units, there may be some turf-building. At the beginning of this partnership, members of the two organizations will have some insecurities about their own department's strength in the partnership. It is also likely that members in each unit will probably wonder what the other unit will bring to the partnership.

It will be important for the supervisors to articulate the value of each unit to the team and to strengthen staff members' reliance on the partnership as a way to build a better service organization.

Impact on Culture

The above changes will have a dramatic impact on the culture of the two organizations. Resistance to change, turf issues, and other such conflicts can be expected to occur and should be expected as a normal part of the process. The order of focus should be first on people, second on processes, and lastly on technology.

Us versus Them

It will be easy for the team members to retreat from a collaborative approach and return to “business as usual” in their respective departments. Everyone should be encouraged to take the welfare of the partnership into consideration when resolving problems and working toward solutions. It will be important for supervisors to recognize when turf issues arise and work to discourage “us versus them” attitudes.

Administrative Support is Crucial

For years this university has been struggling to support the instructional technology needs of the faculty and students. This collaboration offers a great opportunity for the community to pull together and support an initiative that has developed between the two organizations that have been providing what services they can within their existing organizational structures. If this partnership is to survive, and in fact, thrive, it is critical that the university administration supports this partnership as its main initiative for development of instructional technology for this campus. It is equally important to recognize the commitment each organization has given to this partnership and to respect the administrative responsibility and authority of both Information Technology and Library Affairs.

If successful, there will be more work to do than staff resources. Administration will be updated on a regular basis as to projects completed, work left to do, and the potential campus impact on integrating technology into teaching/learning.

Unmanaged Expectations

It will be imperative from the beginning of this collaboration that the University administration supports this operation. However, with existing staff in each of the units, the partners in this collaboration are confident that they can meet the current identified needs of their clients. It is likely that expectations from clients of the two organizations will become greater than we currently can accommodate. It will be important that clients understand that, in the early stages of this program, we can only do so much with existing resources and that we will re-visit our goals and objectives after a six-month review. It will be important to illustrate that this is a collaborative experiment, bringing together a number of services and resources to better meet the needs of our clients. But over time, it is likely that new needs will be identified and will be addressed in future discussions concerning the evolution of this collaboration.

Budget cuts

As the visibility of this service center grows, it is clear that the demands on our time will greatly increase. If University budget cuts are applied to this partnership, it is clear that we will not be able to meet even the traditional level of service offered to our existing clients. It is imperative that funding for this partnership not just remain the same, but that it increases in proportion to the demand for services. The administration will be apprised of the future needs in a timely fashion.

Inadequate training

Although staff members in each of the units have strong educational backgrounds in the various areas of instructional technology, continued appropriate training will be critical to the long-term success of this project. It is essential that team members be provided with cross-training and backup support to ensure the smooth operation of all functions. The nature of

this type of organization is that the demands always change based on new technologies becoming available and new clients becoming associated with the group. It is imperative that staff understand that they have support from their team members when they really need it. It is important that the University administration commit to the ongoing training of its instructional technology staff in order to continue to meet the changing needs of our clients.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Expiration and Renewal of Agreement

This agreement will remain in effect for one year from the date it is signed. Sixty days prior to the expiration date, this agreement will be evaluated for renewal. Any revisions to the current agreement will be negotiated with a goal of having a new contract in place by the expiration date of the existing agreement.

Either Library Affairs or Information Technology can terminate this agreement at any time with a written six-month notice.

Ground Rules

An Equal Partnership

This is considered an equal partnership. Neither Library Affairs nor Information Technology should be perceived by the campus as the primary provider of services.

Team Concept

Everyone involved in the partnership must contribute to a climate of openness, mutual respect and teamwork. If a problem arises, both sides of the partnership will be involved in its solution. It will be important for supervisors to recognize when turf issues arise and work to discourage “us versus them” attitudes.

Goal-Setting

In six-month cycles, goals for the upcoming cycle will be established and the previous cycle’s goals will be evaluated. The process will involve all members of the partnership team.

Communication

We should avoid a “stovepipe culture,” where communications must travel upward through the chain of command on one side of the organization and back down through the chain of command on the other side. This is counterproductive and contributes to an “us versus them” attitude. While certain decisions will and should remain in the domain of managers and the administration, day-to-day decisions on how to accomplish tasks will be left to the individual teams.

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level possible in the organization. Only when an impasse is reached should it be elevated to the next higher level.

What the team can expect from management

Managing Assignments and Workload

- Management must recognize when team members are committed to a "full plate" of assignments.
- Review priorities when new assignments are made or priorities/direction change.
- Set clear goals; tell them what we want done – resist the urge to tell them how to do it.
- Provide sufficient resources to accomplish the assignment.

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- Allow sufficient time (and room on the plate) to do the assignment professionally.

Communication/Support

- Managers must recognize contributions and excellence.
- Encourage initiative and risk-taking.
- Mutual respect and support.
- Frequent, honest, and direct criticism of their work.
- Tell them our concerns as soon as we become aware of them.
- Ability to resolve disagreements professionally.

What management can expect from team members

- Take personal responsibility for success of the partnership.
- Provide superior service to our clients.
- Keep commitments.
- Look for ways to do the job better.
- No surprises. Keep managers informed of developments and issues.
- Contribute to a climate of openness, mutual respect and teamwork. Value and respect the unique skills and perspectives brought to the partnership by your colleagues.
- Negotiate in a positive way. Being right is not enough. Voice your opinion, but be willing to subordinate your own wishes for the good of the partnership.
- You are part of a team. Don't hesitate to ask for advice and support when you need it.