2004-2005 University IT Initiatives Resulting from Miami’s IT Strategic Plan

As a consequence of our university-wide IT Strategic Plan, major university IT initiatives are beginning to take shape for the upcoming fiscal year 2004-5. The tactical goals for the upcoming year are in the process of being specifically defined in April and May, with commencement of work following thereafter. However, before spring semester ends, I want to share with the university community what the general expectations are for the upcoming year. Let me present these ordered by the IT strategic goals in the plan we have adopted:

**Strategic Goal 1 – Empower and Enhance Learning & Research**

1. A significantly upgraded classroom support unit will be established and appropriate roles and responsibilities for this unit will be defined. A classroom technology faculty advisory group will be established on each campus. Additionally, tiers of classroom technology configurations will be defined and a continuing upgrade to classrooms will begin during the year.
2. A research support service unit will be established by creating Unix/Linux workstation support positions and research application programming positions. Also, a faculty advisory group for research computing will be established.
3. A project to improve the stability and production-worthiness of our online course management system (Blackboard) will be undertaken.
4. Targeted, voluntary web-based course projects will be undertaken to demonstrate an improved process for supporting faculty in course redesign to incorporate effective use of technology in these courses.

**Strategic Goal 2 – Build and Expand Reliable, Robust, Secure Access to Information**

5. The university will be deploying wireless network access (802.11 WiFi) where it’s needed on all campuses. The expectation is that approximately 85% of key locations will be accessible by the end of next fiscal year.
6. A pilot project will occur to test the feasibility of providing off-campus “wireless cable modem” service for students, faculty and staff in the Oxford area.
7. Major campus network backbone improvements (conveyance and electronics) will occur, taking advantage of the current university high voltage electrical upgrade project. This will provide a more robust, redundant, fault-tolerant network for our university, as well as facilitate the planned future growth of the network and accommodate the university Facilities Master Plan.
8. Residence hall network connections will be upgraded to switched Ethernet and segmented from the rest of campus, improving service for students living in these halls and enhancing network security for the university as a whole. These upgrades will include institutionally provided wireless (802.11 WiFi) in residence halls.
9. The new Ohio Third Frontier Network will go live as the institutional OARNet and Internet transport, providing capability for much more total bandwidth capacity to the university.
10. An alternative campus-wide server and storage strategy will begin development. This will include determining needs, acquiring equipment and staff, socializing the concept and “marketing” the service to the campus.
11. A study of our “next generation” e-mail and calendaring system and recommendation will be completed.
12. Protecting the university’s mission critical network assets will be enhanced by establishing a university Information Security Office, adding certified staff to support this function, and developing both strategic and tactical plans for information security.
13. A pilot project to provide proactive workstation management will occur. This will include possible features like “pushing” virus protection, applying operating system patches and quarantining infected machines from the rest of the network.
14. Common software licensing and how this can benefit the institution will be studied and feasible solutions will occur.
Strategic Goal 3 – Promote Customer-Centered IT Support and Services

15. A pilot project will occur to demonstrate an alternative end-user support model scenario.
16. A customer service model study will be conducted to review how to improve communications between information technology consumers and providers. This will include initial definition of service levels and assessment criteria.
17. Creation of a client advocate role in the IT Services unit will occur.

Strategic Goal 4 – Ensure Continuous Innovation

18. Discussion will occur and a proposal will be developed regarding the establishment of a program to foster innovative uses of technology on our campuses.

Strategic Goal 5 – Support University Administration and Management

19. Useful access to institutional information will be enhanced by commencing a Decision Support System project. This will include definition of a charter, scope and outcome measures, allocation of staff resources to support the project, development of a project plan, and limited deployment of a prototype solution.
20. To simplify access to operational information for both students and faculty, assessment will occur of a portal solution to replace MyMiami. A study will be conducted and work will begin on a general web site content management solution.
21. Banner improvements will be identified by developing a plan, prioritizing potential targeted improvements and beginning implementation of these. Possible targets might include commencement of the implementation of automated purchasing/requisitioning, tearing down perceived functional barriers, reducing local modifications to Banner, cleaning up “loose ends” remaining from the 1999 implementation, making the application more user-friendly, and preparing for Banner Release 7, which has significant changes forthcoming.

Strategic Goal 6 – Plan and Manage Information Technology

22. A study will be performed and a recommendation made regarding how the university might best address continuous “technology refresh” funding requirements. This will include review of possible technology fee recommendations to help alleviate this inadequacy and ensure that our students have access to current technology and related services to accomplish their learning outcome objectives.
23. This large number of IT projects requires that an IT Project Office be established. This service has been started by consultant contractors over the past year, but resource commitments will be made to oversee the portfolio of projects.
24. Resources will be committed to guarantee continuation of effective IT planning and governance articulation.
25. Systems will be implemented to assist the vice president for information technology in more effective management of institutional IT, both quantitatively and qualitatively.
26. Resources will be allocated to address understaffing and “pent-up demand” that have adversely affected quality of service to the university over the past several years.
27. Data will be collected and analyzed to assess adequacy of IT staff compensation relative to the existing market.

I hope you share my enthusiasm about the university’s support for these undertakings. There is still a significant amount of planning and campus interaction required before many of these projects can commence. Let me express my appreciation to the entire university community for all of the effort and valuable time that you have invested in helping us identify both the strategic goals and, more specifically, these critical tactical targets for next year. I look forward to continued engagement with you as we begin making Miami University an even better place to learn, teach and live.

J. Reid Christenberry
Vice President for Information Technology
306 Hoyt Hall
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056
E-mail: vp-it@muohio.edu
Before You Leave for the Summer (Important Miami account tips)

Before leaving for the summer, it is important to do some account maintenance. The number one problem that is fielded by the Support Desk during the summer season is forgotten passwords. Resolving password problems is much more difficult when you are not on one of Miami’s campuses. Therefore, just a little bit of planning can save you a lot of trouble.

First and foremost, make sure that you know what your password is. If you do not use Miami’s services on a regular basis, it is quite possible that you may have forgotten it. Please visit the Support Desk before leaving to resolve this issue. As stated before, getting assistance with your password outside one of our campuses is more difficult. Please visit our Knowledge Base Case on Resetting Forgotten Passwords for information on Miami’s password policy.

The easiest way to solve password problems from summer locations is to use your Secret Question and Answer. If you have not created a Question and Answer, we urge you to do so before you leave. You may do this by visiting http://muohio.edu/password and selecting I would like to change/create my secret question & answer. Please note that the security of your account relies not only on good personal password policies, but also on the difficulty of your answer to your secret question. That is, your password is only as good as your Secret Question and Answer pair, so choose carefully.

Lastly, forwarding your e-mail to a different account you use more frequently may be a helpful way for you to keep tabs on what is happening here at Miami while you are away. You may do this by editing your directory information at http://muohio.edu/ph. (See the Knowledge Base case #8605 “Forwarding e-mail from a Miami account to another e-mail address” for more information.) FYI on forwarding e-mail - problems may arise from SPAM filters that Internet services such as Yahoo or Hotmail use. Filters such as these may view mail that is forwarded in this way as SPAM. After setting up e-mail forwarding, monitor your mail traffic for any problems.

Enjoy your summer!

Students—Buy Your Microsoft Software Now!

Our current Microsoft contract will expire on June 30, 2004. Prices for Microsoft software will be substantially higher after that date.

If you are thinking of purchasing Microsoft software for your personally-owned computer, please do so prior to June 30 to take advantage of the low pricing. Some examples of pricing include, but are not limited to:

- Windows XP Professional - $12.50
- Office X (Mac) - $18.50
- Office XP (Windows) - $18.50
- Office 2003 (Windows) - $18.50

You will need to present your Miami ID card and sign a license agreement when you purchase the software. For a complete list of Microsoft software savings, check out the Miami University Bookstore web site at: http://www.muohio.edu/bookstore/microsoft.htm.

Students please note: Students own the license even after leaving Miami, as long as the software has been registered with Microsoft. Further, students must select one platform - Macintosh or Windows.

Faculty and staff please note: Faculty and staff have the right to use the software as long as they are employed at Miami. If you are interested in installing the Microsoft software on a university-owned computer, please contact your TSR; different contract provisions apply on software installation on university computers.
Account Deletion Policy for Departing Miami Students, Faculty and Staff

Students graduating in May can expect their MUnet accounts to remain available to them over the summer, providing continued access to myMiami and its resources, including but not limited to NetDisk, e-mail, BannerWeb and Career Services. The suspension and deletion of these accounts will begin in September 2004.

IT Services recommends that graduating students prepare for the eventual deletion of their accounts by recovering data from their user space on Miami's servers, saving important email, and re-routing their muohio.edu e-mail to another e-mail account.

Instructions and additional information can be found in Knowledge Base Case 92519.

Account suspension and deletion policies for students graduating at times other than May, students not returning to Miami, and for faculty and staff leaving Miami can be reviewed at:

http://www.units.muohio.edu/mcs/information/AccountPolicies.htm

Questions on account policies may be directed to the IT Services Support Desk at (513) 529-7900.

IT Services Continues Web-based Training Open Sessions

The Learning and Information Services (LIS) group of IT Services will continue to offer Open Sessions for Miami’s web-based training options through July.

These sessions allow faculty, staff and students the opportunity to get basic training on using the two web-based training tools (SkillPort and VTC) available to Miami. The sessions also give the university community a place to complete web-based training courses, using either Macintosh or Windows machines.

Through SkillPort, Miami faculty, staff and students have access to 328 self-paced, web-based training courses on computer applications, advanced technical topics, and business skills (see complete course listing). Miami also offers VTC web-based training courses for faculty and staff. VTC courses focus primarily on computer applications and operating systems and can be accessed from both Windows and Macintosh computers. (SkillPort can only be accessed from a Windows computer.) VTC and SkillPort can both be accessed through Miami’s training page – go to myMiami.muohio.edu and click “Training” under Quick Links.

Open sessions are currently scheduled once-a-week through July in Gaskill 362. To register for a session, or just to see the complete list of dates and times, visit the TRAIN registration system.
My document is damaged!! Can you recover it for me?

As the semester nears its finish, students of all disciplines are completing final papers and projects. Hours of hard effort have gone into these papers, but many students rely on the flimsy piece of mylar that is inside 3 1/2” floppy disks to store this precious work. Others will use zip disks, and many will use their personal computer’s hard drive.


The loss of a term paper can be devastating. Each semester the Support Desk does its best to assist distraught students who bring in their damaged floppies in hope of some miracle. The Support Desk has tools that can sometimes, but not always, recover lost data. Often, students have not made a backup of these critical final documents and, if the damaged document is not recoverable, they have no recourse but to start over.

Much time and sorrow can be saved if backups are made. Important files should always be saved to multiple locations--two copies on the same piece of media are not sufficient for this purpose. See the Knowledge Base case #5868 for examples of appropriate locations. A backup will come to the rescue when the original file is damaged or missing.

Universal Disk Space (UDS) is a very good choice for primary storage or backup storage. Please consult the KnowledgeBase at http://kb.muohio.edu and use the search argument UDS to view the many articles on UDS use.

Contact the Support Desk at supportdesk@muohio.edu or (513) 529-7900 for further assistance.

New Microsoft Contract to Take Effect July 1, 2004

Miami University, in conjunction with the Ohio IUC (Inter-University Consortium), negotiated a contract with Microsoft in 1999 to provide software for all university owned computers. The contract also allowed the Bookstore to sell software very inexpensively to faculty, staff and students for personally owned computers. This contract is set to expire June 30, 2004. A new contract has been negotiated but will result in a very significant change for students.

The new contract will continue to provide specific Microsoft software for university owned computers. (The software covered includes any software title that is part of our current contract -Office for Windows and Macintosh, 32-bit OS upgrades, Front Page, Publisher and Visual Studio.) However, students will no longer be able to purchase Microsoft software from the University Bookstore at the same low price as today ($18.50 or less). Instead, students purchasing Microsoft software at the University Bookstore will be purchasing based on a "Student Select agreement" and can expect to pay between $50 - 75 per software title. Additionally, the software will no longer be available for loan from the University libraries as a result of new Microsoft anti-piracy contract language.
New Senior Director of Academic Technology Services

The Office of the Vice President for Information Technology is pleased to announce that, effective May 1, 2004, Ms. Carolyn Gard will be joining Miami's staff as our new Senior Director for Academic Technology Services. Ms. Gard comes to Miami with a distinguished record as a leader in establishing nationally recognized programs of institutional support for academic communities at several universities. Her most recent success has been at Georgia State University in Atlanta, where she was charged with developing a unit named University Educational Technology Services (UETS). Under Ms. Gard's leadership, this unit grew dramatically and developed:

- Standards for classroom technology and a "production quality" classroom support service with guaranteed response times seven days per week, from 7 AM to 10 PM.
- A highly successful eLearning department involved in team-oriented support of instructional design and course development support for faculty.
- Regular on-campus faculty workshops and symposia related to enhancing teaching and learning. These activities were attended by many faculty from other institutions, also.
- The widespread adoption of their institutional course management system (WebCT) so that, in this past year, it supported 957 faculty teaching 2,191 course sections.
- Leadership at a state level in supporting development of high quality web-based course delivery or augmentation, including hosting services and staff support for an entire university system.
- Partnering with faculty groups to effectively distribute technology fees to support technology replacement and innovation programs at both the institutional and departmental levels.
- A high-end digital media center for student use across multiple disciplines.

In addition to these accomplishments, Ms. Gard led Georgia State's involvement in the EDUCAUSE National Learning Infrastructure Initiative and served on national product advisory boards for WebCT and Element K computer-based training systems.

Prior to serving at Georgia State University, Ms. Gard served the University of Georgia for 24 years, managing services that included consulting and application support, specialized systems, advanced computational methods, high performance computing, computer-based education and library automation systems. She holds degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Catholic University of America.

Ms. Gard will be joined in Oxford by her husband, Tom, who is a retired mathematics professor from the University of Georgia. Please join me in welcoming her upon her arrival here May 1.

J. Reid Christenberry
Vice President for Information Technology
Wired and Wireless Improvements to Miami’s Data Network

IT Services is pleased to announce substantial improvements to the university’s data network. Improvements will begin this summer and will result in a more robust & reliable computer network. Enhancements will be made to both the wired and wireless data networks.

Significant upgrades will be made to wireless service on the Oxford, Hamilton and Middletown campuses. By June 2005, wireless data network service will be provided to over 75% of the most heavily trafficked student areas, including residence halls and classrooms, and over 90% of office and conference room areas.

The first phase of the MUnet Unwired Project will start this summer; it will provide 802.11 wireless services in residence halls. We expect to have wireless service in many residence hall rooms and public areas by the beginning of August 2004. Personally owned access points will not be needed. The net result will be a professionally managed, high quality wireless service. Subsequent phases of the project will provide wireless services to classrooms, student areas (dining facilities, libraries, group gathering spaces, etc.), and other areas of the Oxford, Hamilton and Middletown Campuses. Check the Knowledge Base over the summer for more information on this service.

Additionally, the wired data network will be improved to provide better performance and reliability.

This summer, network infrastructure in the residence halls will be upgraded from shared 10 Megabit connections to dedicated 100 Megabit connections capable of carrying more than 10 times the traffic, improving performance, security and robustness.

Improvements to the network electronics in Hamilton and Middletown, as well as recent improvements on the Oxford campus, will result in a data network that is much more resilient against virus, worm and denial of service attacks.

Pocket PC now Synchronizes with Meeting Maker Calendars

IT Services is now supporting synchronization between Pocket PC devices and the Meeting Maker server. Pocket PC users who wish to synchronize their Meeting Maker calendar with their Pocket PC calendar will need to install Intellisync for Meeting Maker. This software is available from the Software Download page at http://software.muohio.edu. Instructions for installing the software can be found in the Knowledge Base, case #1770.

Meeting Maker supports some recurring event types that are not understood or supported by Pocket PC and vice versa. The following types of events are not supported in Pocket PC. If these types of events are on your Meeting Maker calendar, they will not sync to your Pocket PC calendar.

- Events set to move to a weekday if the event falls on a weekend. The events will synchronize, but will not move to a weekday.
- Weekly events occurring on multiple weeks, such as the first and third weeks of the month.
- Monthly events set to occur on X days from the end of the month.

The following types of recurring events are not supported by Meeting Maker. If these types of events are on your Pocket PC calendar, they will not sync to your Meeting Maker calendar.

- Monthly events set to recur on the 29th, 30th, or 31st of the month, crossing months that do not have those dates.
- Yearly events set to recur on the X week of the month, such as the second week of February.

On occasion, events may generate a conflict when synchronizing your Meeting Maker calendar with a Pocket PC device. Conflicts occur when one or more fields related to the event do not correspond between your Meeting Maker and Pocket PC calendar. By default, when a conflict occurs, Intellisync for Meeting Maker will prompt you for a resolution. You then can choose which calendar takes precedence. Additional information for resolving conflicts can be found in the Knowledge Base, case #78240.
Upgrade to Banner 6 Scheduled for October 2004

Banner is our primary administrative software used for tasks such as student registration, financial aid, payroll, billing, alumni giving and numerous other tasks. Banner 6 is the latest release of this software and we plan to begin use of Banner 6 this October. Those who use Banner 6 will notice interesting changes to the appearance of screens such as fonts and color, but most of the changes are "under the hood" and will bring benefits later. One example is that in the Winter of 2005 we expect that all Banner screens will be available on the Web. Banner 6 will include many important changes required by State and Federal law, such as Financial Aid regulations.

Clients in offices around campus and IT Services Information Systems and Services (ISS) staff will spend many hours this summer testing Banner 6. ISS staff will spend over 1000 hours mostly in June, July and August applying modifications to Banner 6 that we need to continue our business.

Those who are interested in knowing more about Banner 6 can go to http://www.muohio.edu/aisp for further information.

Top Ten Picks for February and March 2004

Want to know what the hot technology questions/topics on campus are? Knowledge Base traffic provides a great clue. The Knowledge Base, a service of Information Technology Services, is designed to put the information you need to use technology effectively at your fingertips.

Following are the most frequently viewed Knowledge Base cases in the past two months.

Note: We’re certain that the top two picks in the following list will come as no surprise since we have all been affected by the periodic MUnet password change policy that went into effect in March. A large amount of confidential information is stored in areas that we access using our MUnet passwords; therefore, this policy is an important step in ensuring the integrity of confidential information.

- Mandatory MUnet Password Change
- Changing the MUnet (Novell NetWare) password
- Making Eudora automatically reply to incoming mail
- Converting Eudora Address Books to Pine
- Filtering messages directly to folders (Eudora)
- Miami UniqueIDs and MUnet passwords
- Using Microsoft Windows Update to get updates, patches and drivers
- Publishing web pages using your Universal Disk Space (UDS)
- Changing mail server settings in Eudora Pro (Windows and Macintosh)
- Setting up Eudora for another person to check e-mail on your computer (Windows)