IT Services Response to Budget Reduction

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Like other divisions, IT Services has been faced with hard decisions this year. IT Services was asked to cut $2,315,390 (a budget reduction of about 11%) as part of Miami’s permanent budget reduction. Additionally, my appointment as long-term Interim Vice President, coupled with several changes in the IT Leadership Team and the budget reductions, offered an opportunity to reexamine the organizational structure of IT Services.

We addressed the budget reductions in a strategic way: assessing our core strengths as well as those services and functions that are less central to Miami’s strategic goals. Throughout our process we recognized that the budget situation encompasses both challenges and opportunities. We looked carefully at how we can provide excellent service to Miami’s students, faculty and staff while being both quality and cost conscious. We realized that this is not just about making cuts to the budget. We also considered where investments are needed for the future. Above all, our focus must remain on student success.

To address the organizational structure, I worked with a team of three higher education IT professionals in a very targeted external review of the IT Services division. That process wrapped up in January and the final report recommended a new high-level organizational framework and identified key goals for our organizational realignment. These include development of a more agile organization and improved lateral communication among our units. We received support for our proposal from the President, Provost and other members of the President’s Executive Council, as well as the IT Strategic Advisory Council and selected faculty.

Since receiving the report of the external review team, I have been working with the leadership team and the first line managers to identify the “building blocks” for our new organization – those functions that we see as critical for us to provide to the University community and the processes we need for optimal service delivery. We’ll identify the key roles required to support those processes and functions. As a final step, we’ll develop the organization chart to reflect reporting relationships. We expect to have more information to announce in May.

IT Services Budget Reduction Summary

- $1,851,046 in personnel costs (80%):
  - 22 positions were eliminated
  - 13 occupied and 9 vacant positions
  - 6 classified and 16 unclassified positions
  - 9 positions with management titles, 3 with coordinator titles, 10 staff positions
- $464,344 in operating and non-personnel costs (20% of the total reduction)
- The services provided by IT that are being reduced, realigned or eliminated are:
  - Dial-in modem pool, eliminated
  - Equipment checkout service, eliminated with limited exceptions
  - Photography services, reduced
  - Instructor-led training, eliminated as an on-going service
  - Some administrative assistant responsibilities, reassigned or eliminated
  - Gaskill reception responsibilities, eliminated
  - Some application security responsibilities, reassigned
  - Print Center staffing, reduced in anticipation of decrease in departmental printing
  - Some Data Center facilities duties, reassigned
  - Forensic consultants on retainer; bring this activity in-house
  - ELI (EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative) subscription, eliminated
  - Acetate rolls for overhead projectors no longer provided
  - Phase out IBM AIX hardware and software
  - Phase out SUN hardware and software
  - Phase out SUN One/LDAP software
Blackboard Outage Planned for May 12-15 for Upgrade

In order to upgrade to version 8.0, Blackboard will be unavailable from 6:00 pm on Tuesday, May 12 to 6:00 am on Friday, May 15.*

Significant improvements in this new version of the Blackboard Learning Management System are to be found in the new “Grade Center”. Previously known as the Gradebook, the Grade Center offers a variety of new functions through a redesigned tool bar:

- Faculty will be able to enter grades directly through a spreadsheet, create and print reports such as a final grade report, and use a variety of new grade calculations such as average, minimum/maximum, and improved weighted and total scores.

- Smart Views will allow faculty to customize the Grade Center to display a subset of students based on selected criteria. These customized displays can be saved and used again. Students can be sorted based on course, group, performance measurements, or other criteria. Once built and saved, Smart Views become a selectable list item on the Current View drop-down menu in the Grade Center page, enabling easy navigation from one view to another.

- Instructors will be able to create a Grading Schema — a diagram based on percentage ranges that match scores to specific grade displays — and then use it in grading. The instructor can choose how grades display to students, for example, as letter grades, percentages or raw numbers.

During the outage, users will be unable to access content in the myMiami/Blackboard system. Most non-Blackboard services normally accessed via myMiami, including e-mail, BannerWeb, Kronos and others, will be available during the outage via links on a web page that will display when users attempt to access myMiami. As soon as the upgrade is completed, all content will be fully available.

For the most current updates on the planning for the Blackboard upgrade, please refer to the Blackboard Support Tab on myMiami under the “Current Blackboard Issues” module or contact Advanced Learning Technologies at 513-529-6068 or alt@muohio.edu.

*As indicated above, upgrading myMiami/Blackboard will require a system-wide outage beginning at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, May 12. The upgrade should be complete and the system restored by 6:00 am on Friday, May 15. However, should the upgrade not complete as planned, the outage could be extended through Sunday, May 17. Throughout the outage, progress updates will be posted to the Blackboard Instructors LISTSERV.
Do You Have the Best Wireless Connection Possible?

Although you may not be aware of it, Miami provides a number of ways to connect to the wireless network while on campus. These are reflected in different “networks” that appear in your wireless network listing when you are within range of a Miami wireless access point.

All connection methods are not equal! Depending upon your choice, you will have varying levels of speed, security, and network access. The listing below outlines the options – IT Services strongly recommends you configure your computer to use the first connection method for the best wireless experience.

Miami Wireless Connection Options:

- **MU-WIRELESS: Strongly recommended for students, faculty and staff.** MU-WIRELESS provides a secure connection and gives you a full range of network services including the ability to access university file servers and print to university pay-for-print or departmental printers. To connect to MU-WIRELESS, additional configuration is required beyond simply selecting it. Taking a few minutes to do so is well worth the time, as you’ll get a more stable and secure connection with a broader array of network services than the alternatives. Configuration instructions in IT Help: Windows Vista, Windows XP, Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard, Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger.

- **MU-WIRELESS-LITE: Not recommended - slated for retirement by Fall 2009.** MU-WIRELESS-LITE provides easy but less secure access to the wireless network. Due to the lack of security, when connected to MU-WIRELESS-LITE you are restricted to web browsing and instant messaging, unless you use Miami’s VPN client. This option has been provided because of the ease of connecting but will be phased out in favor of MU-WIRELESS by next fall. If you are currently connecting to MU-WIRELESS-LITE, IT Services recommends following the instructions to configure your computer to connect to MU-WIRELESS.

- **MU-GUEST: Limited, reduced speed option provided as a courtesy for university guests.** MU-GUEST provides a reduced bandwidth (slower) connection to Miami’s wireless network. It is not inherently secure and provides access only to web browsing (guests can connect to secure web pages or external VPN services to set up a secure session). Individuals do not need to log in to use this service but simply click the “9 hour guest access” button that appears on the login page when you open a web browser. This option is not recommended for students, faculty or staff because of its limitations.

If you are not certain which of these connection options you are using, please take a look at the wireless networks listing on your computer. If you have questions, please contact the IT Services Support Desk at 513-529-7900 or ithelp@muohio.edu.
IT Workshops Scheduled for April-June 2009

IT Services will be offering a number of hands-on IT workshops in April, May and June including:

- Office 2007* Microsoft Office 2007 Jumpstart
  - Microsoft Excel 2007: Managing, Organizing and Analyzing Data
  - Microsoft Excel 2007: Analyzing Data with Charts and PivotTables
  - Microsoft Word 2007: Advanced Features
  - Microsoft Word 2007: More Advanced Features
- Web Editing: Adobe Contribute CS4 Basics*
- Internet-Native Banner 7 Navigation (coached one-on-one sessions by request)*
- Mastering Miami’s Web and Paper Survey Tools

For More Information/Special Requests

For more information or to request a special session of one of these workshops for a department or student group of 8 or more to be held between now and June 30, 2009, please call 529-5530 or e-mail LIS@muohio.edu. Every effort will be made to accommodate requests as resources allow.

*If you’ve been interested in attending workshops in these areas but haven’t had a chance to do so yet, please take advantage of these offerings! These are the last planned sessions for workshops in areas noted with an *. As indicated in the “IT Services Response to Budget Reduction” article included in this publication, due to budget cuts IT Services does not anticipate being able to continue instructor-led training as an ongoing service beyond July 1st. IT Services will continue to provide web-based training to assist you with learning new software applications. Please visit the IT Services Training page at www.muohio.edu/training for information about the web-based training options and other learning resources available throughout the Miami University community.

Changes to Network Login, File Servers & Sharing Coming This Summer/Fall

While mostly invisible to end users except for the initial log-on screen on university computers, Novell has been an important part of Miami’s network environment to date. Recent changes in the overall network infrastructure mean Miami now has other alternatives for functions historically served by Novell. These functions include items like network login, network file/folder rights assignment, and network printer queues. To streamline the network environment and reduce costs, the university will be moving away from Novell to a Windows environment during the remainder of this calendar year.

Project work is well underway. The storage hardware needed for migrating files to the Windows environment arrived in mid-April. The team is busy building the production server environment, including Window servers to be used for file sharing as well as servers to be used for web access, secure file transfer, and data migration. This work is slated to be completed on April 30th, allowing for the production environment to be tested as a whole.

The project team will be working with departmental representatives throughout the university to schedule migration dates for each area in the June 15 to December 31 timeframe. As is typical for the implementation of new services, IT Services will be the first department to migrate files to the new environment in order to ensure all is working smoothly. The IT Services migration is slated for May 22.

From an end user perspective, this migration will change fairly little about how you interact with the network. If you have not already moved to Active Directory for your computer login, you’ll see a slightly different login screen. The goal is to have automated tools take care of adjusting your drive mapping and printer settings, but some manual intervention may be required. If so, detailed instructions will be provided.

More information will be shared via the e-Report and departmental representatives as migrations near. Please feel free to contact the project manager, Carrie Ledford, at ledforch@muohio.edu if you have questions about this project.
Blackboard Support Tab Added to myMiami to Assist Faculty with Blackboard Use

In order to continuously improve support for Blackboard, Advanced Learning Technologies (ALT) has added a new "Blackboard Support" tab to myMiami and made it available to all faculty members.

The tab includes many modules designed to help faculty members get the most out of Blackboard:

- **About the Blackboard Learning System** provides an overview of the Blackboard Learning System, information about browsers, and allows you to test your own browser(s) for Blackboard use.

- **Creating a Blackboard Course Site** provides a step-by-step guide to creating a Blackboard site as well as answers to problems that may occur during the course creation process.

- **Blackboard and You During the Semester** offers recommendations about managing your course site(s) at the beginning and at the end of semesters.

- **Designing and Using a Blackboard Course Site** points to resources, guides, and tips for planning, personalizing, and enhancing student learning in your course site(s).

- **More Blackboard Support** links you to support resources including the Blackboard Learning System support site and how to self-enroll in it; the Advanced Learning Technologies (ALT) Blackboard website; and IT Help, where you can search solutions to your Blackboard problems.

- **Blackboard Training** provides contact information for individual and group training.

- **Current Blackboard Issues** allows you to stay abreast of current issues with the Blackboard Learning System and issue status as they are resolved.

- **Current News about Blackboard at Miami** links you to current Blackboard usage statistics, new features, and information about new releases.

- **Blackboard Resources for Your Students** provides step-by-step guides and resources that you can share with your students. You are encouraged to send any resources you may develop to ALT at alt@muohio.edu to contribute to improving this module.

We hope you find this resource of value. If you have questions or feedback, please contact ALT at alt@muohio.edu.
REMINDER: Miami’s Dial-up Internet Service Ends 7/1/2009
As previously announced, dial-up Internet service will be removed on July 1, 2009, due to very low usage, availability of low-cost and free alternatives, and the IT Services budget reduction (see first article in this publication).
For more information and links to online Internet Service Provider listings, please see “Selecting an Internet Service Provider” in IT Help at http://ithelp.muohio.edu.
Contact the Support Desk for questions and assistance: 513-529-7900 or ithelp@muohio.edu.

Voice over IP Phone System Transition Saving Departments $$
With 58% of Miami departments and offices moved to the new Voice over IP (VoIP) system, departments are already seeing unexpected savings in their telephone budgets. Departments are choosing to eliminate an average of 37% of their phones, saving the monthly fee associated with each line. Many are also finding that the advanced functionality of the basic desktop phone allows them to replace some of the more expensive Dterm phones with the basic model, saving $20 per month.

New features are being rolled out to allow more customization of the phone service. Users may now choose from a selection of Miami logos and images for the display screen on their phone, and a committee is working on selecting music performed by Miami faculty and students to serve as the Music on Hold in the system.

Unified fax service, integrated voice/video/web conferencing capabilities, and enhanced emergency notification services are on the immediate horizon for the project team.

The VoIP system had its first test under emergency conditions when the Oxford campus experienced a power outage March 26. The project team is pleased to report that core VoIP services functioned as expected. There were several building-specific issues with back-up power supplies. Those have been identified and remediation is in process.

For more information about the VoIP system and its deployment at Miami, go to the project web site at www.muohio.edu/voip.

75 Proposals Received for Student Technology Fee Funding
Earlier this spring, faculty, staff and students were invited to submit proposals for technology projects designed to improve students' experience at Miami on the Oxford campus for student technology fee funding (see February TechTalk article). In response, 75 proposals were submitted for consideration.

The proposals are currently being reviewed by the Student Technology Fee Proposal Review Team, facilitated by Carolyn Gard, Senior Director of Academic Technology Services. Those who submitted proposals will be notified of the review outcome by the end of the semester. Funds will become available on July 1, 2009, and the funded projects will be implemented during the 2009-10 school year.

For more information about the student technology fee and to review all of the proposals that were submitted, please visit www.muohio.edu/techfee. Once the review process is complete, a list of funded projects and funding levels will be posted on the web site.
Document Imaging Saves Student Financial Assistance Time and Improves Service

The past year and a half has seen a big change in the document management approach in the Office of Student Financial Assistance. In early 2008, Student Financial Assistance began using the Banner Document Imaging Suite (BDMS) to scan and index every document the office received. Now, instead of a paper file, each student has an electronic file. According to Brent Shock, Senior Associate Director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance, this approach is yielding a number of benefits:

We are able to provide faster, more accurate service to students and parents. From Banner we can launch the documents that have been submitted, allowing us to quickly and accurately explain discrepancies or missing data. When the student visits us in person, if needed we can print a copy of the document for student or parent to complete right on the spot.

Our 2008-2009 documents are now protected against natural disaster. This is important, as we collect sensitive tax data from students and parents and limits the University’s exposure.

Incoming documents are now centrally received and managed, resulting in fewer instances of misplaced documents. This is especially important since our office has received and imaged over 100,000 pieces of paper this year alone.

Implemented at Miami in late 2007, the BDMS allows the offices to scan paper forms and index both paper and electronic forms into the BDMS system. When viewing a student record in Banner, you can easily access the document images associated with that student.

Since implementation, nine offices have adopted use of the BDMS and collectively have used the system to scan and index more than 1 million documents. Offices currently using the system include Academic Personnel, Alumni, Bursar, Finance/Accounting, Human Resources, OSEO, Registrar, Payroll Services and Student Financial Assistance.

If you believe your office could benefit from document imaging, please contact Linda Knowles (rosels@muohio.edu) to set up an appointment to discuss your office’s needs.
Excel Tip: Calculating Averages on Summary or Grade Data

Many Excel users have used the AVERAGE function to calculate the average of a series of data. But what do you do when you have summary data instead of individual responses and need to calculate an average? (For example, counts of the number of people who selected each rating on a 5-point rating scale like the class evaluation results illustrated in the figure below.)

Figure 1

To arrive at an average in these situations you need to compute a “weighted average”. And while Excel does not have a built-in “weighted average” function, you can easily calculate one with a simple formula which incorporates two Excel functions - the SUMPRODUCT and the SUM function.

How to Calculate a Weighted Average

Using the data in Figure 1, let’s say you want to get the average overall rating for each question. For question 1, nine people strongly agree that they have learned new information in the class. Thirteen people agree, and one said maybe. Using the AVERAGE function would result in an average of 7.7. Of course, this doesn’t make any sense. We should expect an average within the range of the scale (1 to 5). In order to correctly calculate the average overall response to each question, we need to:

1. Multiply the number of individuals selecting each rating by the corresponding rating value (1 – 5)
2. Add the results of those calculations together
3. Divide that result by the total number of responses to the question

The following simple Excel formula does all that for us for question 1:

\[ \frac{\text{SUMPRODUCT(D4:H4, D3:H3)}}{\text{SUM(D4:H4)}} \]

The SUMPRODUCT formula simplifies our task by multiplying each question by its corresponding value and returning the sum of those products (Steps 1 and 2 above). We then simply divide the sum product by the total number of question responses (step 3).

Using this formula, we find that the average response to question 1 is 4.3.

In an academic environment, this weighted average formula has many applications. For example, calculating the average grade earned by students in a particular course based on summary data...
Excel Tip: Calculating Averages on Summary or Grade Data (continued)

The formula can be easily adapted to meet other situations, like calculating a student’s grade based on assignments of different weights...

![Excel Table]

Have More Questions About Excel?

Beyond the Excel help function and a Google search, there are many resources available to assist with Excel.

- Miami’s online self-paced training services (SkillPort and VTC), available via [www.muohio.edu/training](http://www.muohio.edu/training), have a number of Excel 2007 courses.
- There are several instructor-led Excel 2007 workshops scheduled for April – June 2009, for schedules and to register see Microsoft Office 2007 in TRAIN at [www.muohio.edu/TRAIN](http://www.muohio.edu/TRAIN).
- Excel e-books are available in Safari Books Online at [http://www.lib.muohio.edu/etexts/redirect/42](http://www.lib.muohio.edu/etexts/redirect/42) (you can search for Excel 2007 or perform a more specific search for a particular Excel topic).
- The IT Services Support Desk at 513-529-7900 or [ithelp@muohio.edu](mailto:ithelp@muohio.edu) can assist with specific questions/problems.

Green Computing: Adjust Your System Settings to Save Energy (and Money)

Did you know that a computer that is left on in an idle state uses as much as 80 watts of power? If you tack on a typical monitor's power usage too, it can add another 60 watts. With just a few changes to your system settings, you can utilize power management settings to save power and money. Let’s examine some of the options available to you.

With the Windows operating system, there are two options for reduced power. The first is standby. It moves the computer into a low power state (1-3 watts). The major benefit of standby is that the computer will activate for use quickly.

The second option is hibernate, which also consumes 1-3 watts of power. It works by taking the contents of your system memory and writing it to the hard disk. Wake up time is slower than standby, but because the memory is written to the hard drive, it is safe in case of a power failure. Often a good strategy is to activate standby after 30 minutes or so of usage, and then hibernate after an extended period. (View how-to information in IT Help at [http://www.muohio.edu/ithelp/solution04091114214996](http://www.muohio.edu/ithelp/solution04091114214996))

On Mac systems, sleep can be enabled to draw less power. It is functionally similar to standby on Windows machines, so keep that in mind if you leave a lot of work open at a given time.

If you have questions about adjusting your computer settings, please contact the IT Services Support Desk at [ithelp@muohio.edu](mailto:ithelp@muohio.edu) or 513-529-7900.
bigPRINT Initiative Launched to Contain Departmental Printing/Copying Costs

In an effort to help the university understand and contain escalating printing and copying costs university-wide, IT Services and Purchasing have coordinated a new program called the bigPRINT initiative. The objective is to leverage all office copying and printing to bring down costs and reduce the environmental impact through a new contractual relationship with Modern Office Methods (MOM) as the bigPRINT vendor.

The bigPRINT team will visit each department to assess what copying, printing and faxing services they currently use. The experts from MOM will discuss what changes could help the department save money or work more efficiently. The goal is to identify the best way to meet that department’s needs.

Cost savings will vary, depending on the choices that each department will make, but they can be significant. And, as a bonus, bigPRINT is dedicated to reducing the environmental impact of printing and copying. New equipment means less power consumption, two-sided copying (duplexing) will save paper, and a toner container recycling program means less waste.

For more information about the bigPRINT initiative, visit www.muohio.edu/bigprint. If you have immediate needs/questions, please contact the bigPRINT team via the contact form on the web site at http://community.muohio.edu/bigprint/node/1.

STAC Looks Back on Accomplishments and Elects New Leader

Last fall a record 54 students applied for a seat on the 20-person Student Technology Advisory Committee (STAC). This group of students is tasked with representing the voice of the student body on issues related to campus technology. Consisting of students from different majors and organizations across campus, STAC provides a window into how students view technology integration with student life and academics across the University.

The committee has participated in many discussions this year, providing advice to various IT projects to assure that a diverse and strong student voice is being heard. Some notable discussions include:

- The role of technology in the Bicentennial Student Center, specifically the use of the theatre
- Integration of smartphones into campus life
- Miami web site redesign
- ASG’s proposed consolidation of online Student Organization resources

STAC and IT Services recognizes the graduating seniors who have served this year:

- Hunter Olson, Senior, Computer Engineering - recipient of the Senior Service Leadership Award
- Melissa Jewell, Senior, Computer Science
- Anita B. Kumar, Senior, Music Education
- Erin Perone, Senior, Management and Organizations and Interactive Media Studies
- Joseph Puchala, Senior, Architecture
- Gregory Salomon, Senior, Mass Communication

Andrew Virata, first year Chemistry major, was recently elected Student Co-Chair of STAC for 2009-10. He hopes to continue the committee's discussions on student smartphone use and follow up with students regarding the changes and improvements in wireless Internet access across campus. Andrew also hopes to look into student Blackboard use, including identifying which features students currently use and which features they prefer to use.

Applications for STAC membership in 2009-10 will be available at the beginning of fall semester. Watch for an announcement on myMiami.
Summer Tips on Passwords and E-mail

During the summer, the most common questions and problems the IT Services Support Desk fields from students, faculty, and staff who are away from campus relate to passwords and e-mail. Resolving password problems in particular is much more difficult when you are not on campus. Following these quick tips can make a big difference...

Tip #1: Know Your Password!

First and foremost, make sure that you know your MUnet password. If you do not use Miami's services on a regular basis, your password is easy to forget. To check your MUnet password, we suggest that you visit myMiami (http://mymiami.muohio.edu) and log in using your UniqueID and MUnet password. If you receive a login error, make sure to visit the IT Services Support Desk (or a regional campus computer assistance location) to have your password reset before leaving campus. (See "Resetting Forgotten Passwords" in IT Help at http://ithelp.muohio.edu for more information on locations and procedures.)

Tip #2: Create a Secret Question and Answer Pair!!

To assist with resolving password problems, create a Secret Question and Answer pair using the MUnet Password Utilities available within myMiami at http://mymiami.muohio.edu. Just click the "Login help" link in the Login section. In the event that you forget your password, you can select a new one online by answering a few questions about yourself, including your Secret Question. We strongly recommend that you create a Secret Question/Answer pair now at https://was.muohio.edu/perl/was/question if you have not already done so.

If you forget your password when you are away from campus and do not have a secret question/answer, you must complete, have notarized, and send the password reset request form (PDF), available at https://ithelp.muohio.edu/attach/requests_requiring_notarization.pdf in order to have your password reset.

Tip #3: Keep Tabs on E-mail

Following are several tips that can help you manage your Miami e-mail while you are away from campus:

- You can check your Miami e-mail from anywhere in the world using a web browser and Outlook Web Access (OWA). OWA is available from myMiami (http://mymiami.muohio.edu).
- If you use a desktop e-mail client, you can send and receive e-mail from off-campus just as you would from on-campus by using VPN or configuring your e-mail for authenticated SMTP, details available at http://www.muohio.edu/ithelp/solution040972654098507.
- Student mailbox size is limited to 1 GB on the muConnect server. If a student mailbox nears the allocation limit, an e-mail alert will be sent to the student. If a student mailbox reaches 1 GB, the student will not be able to send messages until the mailbox is reduced in size. If a student mailbox reaches 1.1 GB, the student will not be able to send or receive messages until the mailbox is reduced in size. See IT Help at http://ithelp.muohio.edu for information on how to Check Your Mailbox Size and Reduce Your E-mail Disk Usage.
- If you have chosen to forward your e-mail to a non-Miami e-mail address, remember that a copy of each message will be sent to the external address, and the original will be retained in the muConnect account Inbox for thirty (30) days.

More tips on using your Miami accounts while away from Miami can be found in the IT Help solution titled "Using your Miami accounts while away from campus" at http://ithelp.muohio.edu.

Enjoy your summer!

Questions may be directed to the IT Services Support Desk at ithelp@muohio.edu or 513-529-7900.

Find answers online in IT Help! http://ithelp.muohio.edu.