

CONCLUSION

Collaboration: Hallmark of the ITS Success

The Measures of Success initiative has cultivated a "culture of evidence" in how information technology is perceived and managed in the CSU. Equally important, the initiatives within the Integrated Technology Strategy have nurtured and facilitated an unprecedented "culture of collaboration" among CSU campuses in networking and infrastructure buildout, administrative information systems, library resource sharing, learning management systems, and the recent round of academic technology initiatives. CSU campuses have begun to adopt a greater system and statewide perspective as a result of the ITS.

At least two things have played a prominent role in breaking down institutional barriers to collaboration and cooperation, one technical and the other policy-related. By their very nature, telecommunications networks require a high degree of inter-institutional collaboration and integration in setting technical standards and in building the infrastructure. The CSU is part of one of the most robust statewide networks in American higher education, and that has fostered an integrated approach to many things that require the use of information technology. The policy component to campus cooperation has revolved around the concept of "baseline," the goal of insuring a minimum level of IT resources and capabilities across all campuses. A systemwide commitment to baseline standards and capabilities does not prevent a campus from "doing its own thing" or "going its own way," but it does provide a synergistic set of tools and resources for getting there.

The MOS series has documented some of the advantages of institutional collaboration in satisfying the four goals of the ITS: excellence in teaching and learning, the quality of the student experience, administrative quality and efficiency, and personal productivity.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning: The growing ubiquity of mobile and wireless devices is contributing to greater interaction and collaboration in the instructional process for students (especially the Net Generation) and faculty alike. This is influencing the space design of classrooms, libraries, and other facilities to enhance the "social" component of learning. It is also making technology such an integral part of the campus infrastructure that CIOs collaborate with other administrators and faculty more than ever before. ITS initiatives such as MERLOT, the Electronic Core Collection, Foundational Skills, and Digital Marketplace demonstrate the efficiencies of institutional and commercial partnerships while expanding access to learning resources.

Quality of the Student Experience: Traditionally, student support services emphasized "high touch," i.e., interpersonal assistance for advising, financial aid, career counseling, etc. A "high tech" approach automates many of these functions as a means of providing "on-demand" information to students while releasing student services staff to devote more time to students who require it. The Student Mentor initiative described in the 2000-2004 MOS reports is a good example of CSU campuses working together to automate many of the information needs of students associated with applications, admissions, and course registration. The student administration application within the CMS/PeopleSoft system is providing students and faculty with online access to information needed for academic advising, degree audits, and financial aid. The new electronic student services are breaking down organizational silos both within and among institutions.

Administrative Quality and Efficiency: The Common Management System initiative is one of the most ambitious examples of inter-institutional collaboration in American higher education. CSU campuses agreed on common formats and standards for their financial, human resource, and student records and on a centralized data center for managing them. As a result, staff, faculty, and students now have access to much of the information they need online where it is readily accessible 24/7. In addition, campuses are realizing cost efficiencies through the administrative data center consolidation.

Personal Productivity: Nowhere is the power of technology more pervasive or important than in increasing the personal productivity of students, faculty, and staff. The Technology Infrastructure Initiative of the ITS is providing the prerequisite foundation for achieving individual as well as institutional efficiencies. Systemwide purchasing of workstation hardware and software offers economies of scale that can be leveraged to shorten refresh cycles in an era of rapidly evolving technologies. CSU campuses also routinely share knowledge and expertise in the deployment

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of wireless technologies, information security, and learning management systems. Technology is both a means for dissolving institutional barriers to collaboration and an outcome of that process.

The broader policy context involves institutional and public concerns about rising costs for all aspects of the academic enterprise and calls for greater accountability, affordability and quality of learning outcomes. These concerns have focused attention on the need to transform the instructional process. For many years, advocates of this “academic transformation”; have argued that technology can be a powerful tool in creating efficiencies where they are appropriate in the teaching/learning process. Greater collaboration by faculty with instructional designers, technologists, and evaluation researchers in course development, delivery, and assessment is one means for improving learning outcomes. The culture of evidence and collaboration within CSU around information technology offers opportunities to use proven techniques to effect these changes. Helping the system achieve academic transformation through technology is therefore part of the unfinished business of the Integrated Technology Strategy.