

Information Technology Services (ITS)

District ITS staff is responsible for centralized information systems and services that provide technology solutions for the College and District operations. The services provided by the District ITS department complement those provided by the College computer support staff. The primary services provided by District ITS include:

- Administrative computing
- Network infrastructure for the Wide Area Network and Local Area Network
- Servers for District-wide applications
- Desktop support
- Web development and support
- Centralized Help Desk services
- User training
- Technology initiatives supporting Measure B Facilities projects.

District ITS works with the Colleges to evaluate, select, and implement new hardware and software solutions. Through Measure B, this collaboration has been expanded to instructional and administrative computing resources, resulting in new District-wide standards for computer equipment. District ITS meets formally with the College computer support staff through participation on the District Technology Committee and the College Technology Committees. Initiatives for networking, desktop and server standards, common software applications, and Web sites are discussed and scheduled based on the Colleges' needs. The Chancellor's Cabinet assumes responsibility for setting priorities on the major development projects for Banner to ensure the critical automation needs are met District-wide.

District ITS works with all primary College and District personnel – from the Presidents to the hourly employees – through Banner support and through the use of centralized services such as email and the Web. District ITS has the responsibility to evaluate and design automated solutions to solve problems or enhance functionality for the District. ITS and the user groups constantly interface for system analysis and testing of new features or system modifications. Committees such as the Banner Chairs Committee and the Banner User Groups provide forums for all interested parties to discuss relevant issues and opportunities.

Strengths of the Current System

Over the past five years, the District CTO has worked to integrate ITS services across all three sites and find appropriate technology solutions to satisfy needs District-wide. In addition, the CTO has collaborated closely with the Colleges to effectively coordinate operations and services. Through this cooperative effort, the technology committees have been able to significantly improve the District's networking, enterprise servers, Web sites, desktop equipment, and software options.

The District has established a similar committee structure to evaluate and recommend new technology advancements for the Banner Enterprise System. These Banner User Group recommendations are then brought to the Chancellor's Cabinet for review,

approval, and integration into the multi-year plan for Banner project priorities. This ensures that all locations have the same focus and that the limited resources available for change are effectively utilized. Banner projects are evaluated for priorities based on impact to students, improved productivity, and reduction of costs. The current emphasis for Banner is to automate manual procedures at the District and Colleges, to make data accessible to a larger user population, and to migrate more functions to the Web platform for ease-of-use as well as remote access.

District ITS analysts possess significant knowledge of the Banner Enterprise System and they are highly-regarded by the Sungard vendor since the District has used the system since the early 1990's. In addition, the staff's extensive years of service to the District has resulted in a thorough understanding of operations and procedures District-wide. The staff's knowledge and stability provide valuable insight when evaluating new systems and performing major upgrades. The District ITS staff is very team-oriented and flexible in adapting to changing priorities as needed. The staff focuses on high-quality customer service and operates as a partner with the user community in accomplishing the District's goals.

Weaknesses/Problem Areas of the Operating System

The District ITS resources are shared between operational support for current systems and development projects for new implementations. The limited staff size in all areas restricts how many new projects can be completed within any given year. In addition, budget constraints severely limit the use of consultants to supplement staffing.

Training in Banner has been a challenge for some years, due to the frequent turnover in the user areas. District ITS staff assists in the technical training, but the functional training remains the responsibility of the user groups and is largely inadequate due to time constraints. Furthermore, all user areas suffer from a lack of written departmental Banner procedures.

Although the Banner System's comprehensive features for students, finance, financial aid, human resources, and payroll have been a strong asset to the District, the departments are not utilizing all the system's automation capabilities to the fullest extent. The District needs to review the latest Banner System features and their current business processes to evaluate where changes can be introduced that will streamline processes and improve efficiency.

Under Measure B, funding is available for supplemental resources, but finding full-time analysts with sufficient skill and knowledge in both IT network and construction has been challenging. Although the District and Colleges have made significant strides over the past couple of years with instituting new technology standards District-wide, there are still additional areas to address such as Wireless and Smart Classrooms. This is an area that will continue to expand as the Bond facilities construction accelerates.

Goals – Specific Projects

The multi-year project objectives for the District ITS have been defined through a combination of the Banner Project Priority List and the District Strategic Plan Requests included in Appendix A. For each project listed in these Appendix A charts, project goals are provided with the corresponding Action Plan, People Involved, Estimated Cost, and Timeline. For the District Strategic Plan chart, only the tasks requiring some ITS action for technology updates were extracted from the goals identified within this document for the other District Departments. It should be noted that the Strategic Cost Review conducted by KH Consulting in 2005 provided recommendations for ITS projects and many of these suggestions are reflected in these two lists in Appendix A.

The Banner Project Priority List was established in 2005 by the Chancellor's Cabinet; this list is updated as new requirements are identified. Some key activities that are currently in progress include:

- Room Scheduling Software
- Crystal Ad-hoc Reporting
- Automated Timesheets
- Web for Faculty with online grades
- Luminus Portal with Student E-mail
- Elumens Student Learning Outcomes
- Web for Finance for expenses, budgets, and purchase requisitions.

The draft of this Strategic Plan was used to develop a list of ITS tasks that need to be achieved to support the primary goals of other District departments. Some of these goals are already a part of the planned Banner Project Priority List. Other areas of emphasis for the department include:

- Taking advantage of more Banner features
- Improving training for Banner
- Documenting procedures and processes
- Streamlining processes and improving efficiencies
- Improving reporting tools
- Increasing Web-based Banner functions for remote access
- Implementing Business Process Improvements
- Implementing new customer outreach and communication initiatives
- Creating electronic forms.

The Measure B project list for the next five years was established in 2003 by the Technology groups (with updates provided as needed), but it is too extensive to be included in this document. The Information Technology Master Plan for the District and the Facility Master Plans for the Colleges contain Action Plans, Estimated Cost, and Timelines for all the ITS technology initiatives being completed under Measure B.

Goals – General

1. *The District should reassess the importance of many of the routine but time-consuming operational tasks that Banner users request on a daily/weekly basis.*

These routine tasks need to be either minimized or handled by temporary technical staff if the Banner developmental projects are to assume a more accelerated timeline.

Action Plan: District ITS will begin to utilize the automated Banner Operational Task List for each user group to track ALL requests received by ITS for action. Currently, many requests are received via phone or email and are completed without being documented on the automated Banner Task List. This procedure will allow the Banner Chair representatives for each of the user areas to more effectively evaluate what types of activities are consuming the ITS analysts' time, which takes away from the more complicated development projects. In addition, District ITS will reassess the usage of the Help Desk to track calls for Banner requests and utilize this automated tracking system for routine operational tasks instead of having phone calls go directly to the ITS analysts. As District ITS increases ITS programmer analysts, the new hires will be utilized on the routine operational tasks which will allow the Senior Programmer Analysts to concentrate on the more complex Banner Priority Projects directed by the Chancellor's Cabinet.

People Involved: Chief Technology Officer, VPs and Directors at Colleges and District, Banner User Chairs, ITS Analysts

Estimated Cost: Internal Resources.

Timeline: On-going

Person(s) Responsible: Chief Technology Officer, Banner User Chairs

2. *Full-time staff increases should be made where appropriate in order to adequately accommodate the Banner priorities and the District Strategic Plan.*

Action Plan: Currently, there is one ITS analyst assigned to each main Banner user area who services the daily operation needs, development projects, production problem resolution, and training for that Banner user area. Based on the volume of manual tasks that each Banner user group is attempting to automate fully as we get closer to a paperless environment to achieve efficiencies and improve productivity, the ratio for each Banner user area should be at least 2 FTE programmer/analysts. The Chief Technology Officer will evaluate the ITS manpower resources needed to meet the critical deadlines identified for the Banner Project Priorities and the District Strategic Plan. New hires will be utilized to service the routine Banner operational tasks to backfill for the Senior Programmer Analysts so they have time to work on the high level Priority tasks. Recommendations for new hires will be made to the Chancellor. Contingent on budget availability, positions will be approved by the Chancellor's Cabinet for new programmer analysts to service the College and District needs for automation. During the Summer 2007, three positions were identified (2 Programmer Analyst II and 1 Administrative Analyst II) as immediate increases required and these were approved by the Board. Offers have been extended for all three positions and staff will be in place for the start of the Fall term. In order to achieve the 2:1 ratio for ITS analysts to Banner user areas,

District ITS would require two additional programmer analysts over the next fiscal year.

People Involved: Chief Technology Officer, Chancellor, Chancellor Cabinet

Estimated Cost: \$220,000/year for 3 positions. Additional \$146,000 for 2 more positions.

Timeline: September 2007 for 3 positions. April 2008 for 2 more positions.

Person(s) Responsible: Chief Technology Officer

3. *The District should devise methods to ensure department-specific Banner training and documentation. If internal resources are not adequate for this task, outside assistance may be warranted.*

Action Plan: The District ITS has recommended in the past to establish ITS staff positions that can be dedicated to the training needs for the Banner users and assist with procedural documentation on how to use the Banner System. Currently, ITS assists the Banner groups in training new hires on the technical aspects of the Banner System. Following the ITS training, the user groups are then responsible for training new hires on the procedural aspects for their specific department. The same ITS analysts who do the Banner operational tasks and Banner development projects are the same staff that perform the user technical training on Banner, so this does not allow enough time to do ample training on a recurring basis as needed. To-date, District ITS has contracted with temporary consultants to assist with the training and documentation tasks and will continue to use this contract help as needed. For a long term solution, the District ITS should pursue hiring 1-2 Administrative Systems Analyst who could be solely responsible for these training and documentation tasks for all Banner user groups. The full time solution maintains the knowledge base within the District and remains consistent from year to year.

People Involved: Chief Technology Officer, Chancellor, Chancellor's Cabinet, Directors and Managers at Colleges and District, ITS Analysts

Estimated Cost: \$120,000 yearly for 2 full time positions or minimum \$64,000-\$96,000 yearly for consultants

Timeline: On-going as needed

Person(s) Responsible: Chief Technology Officer

4. *In addition to the current Banner User Groups, the District should develop a separate Executive Steering Committee -- with representatives from the Chancellor's Cabinet -- to discuss topics, review progress, and make additions as needed for major District-wide projects.*

Action Plan: Banner Project Priorities are initially discussed at the individual Banner User group meetings and then recommendations are forwarded to the Chancellor's Cabinet for review and final approval. Periodic progress on the Banner Project Priorities is provided in both the Banner User group meetings and in the Chancellor's Cabinet. The Chief Technology Officer and Chancellor discussed the option of establishing a new Executive Steering Committee for review, status, and approval of the Banner Priority Projects. It was determined that the same participants that would participate in this new Executive Steering Committee are the same members as the Chancellor's Cabinet. Therefore, it was determined that each quarter one of the Cabinet meetings will be reserved for the Banner Project Priorities to review progress and introduce new projects to be prioritized. In addition, Banner User groups have been reconfigured to include cross-functional areas rather than a single Banner user area to ensure effective communication across the Colleges and District about the Banner requirements and activities. Effective Fall 2007, the new Banner groups include: (1) Finance & Human Resources (2) Student & Financial Aid (3) Finance and Financial Aid (4) Academic Services, Human Resources, and Student

People Involved: Chief Technology Officer, Chancellor, Chancellor's Cabinet

Estimated Cost: Internal Resources

Timeline: On-going

Person(s) Responsible: Chief Technology Officer, Banner User Chairs, Banner User Groups

5. *The District should standardize the following Measure B initiatives District-wide over the next couple of years:*

- *Implementation of Wireless for the classrooms and general student/administrator use.*
- *Establishment of a template for different types of Smart Classroom configurations based on disciplines and course needs.*
- *Migration towards consolidated storage solutions such as SANS or NAS.*
- *Upgrading of the tape backup system across all locations in conjunction with the new storage solutions.*
- *Establishment of more central PO agreements such as the Gateway PC agreement as well as the Cisco switches and Printers.*
- *Expansion of Video Conferencing and Streaming Media Capabilities*

Action Plan: District ITS and the College Computer Support staffs have worked collaboratively since 2005 to establish district-wide standards for computer equipment, network infrastructure devices, and cabling to support Measure B improvements. The existing standards are reviewed on a regular basis and modified appropriately when needed to ensure the District takes advantage of any new technology innovations or price leverages. The District Technology Committee, which consists of technical representatives from the colleges and district, will continue to be the forum where these

standards are discussed, defined, and documented to be utilized for new equipment RFP's and construction contracts.

People Involved: Chief Technology Officer, College VPs Business Services, District ITS Network Staff, College Computer Support Staff, Purchasing, Facilities

Estimated Cost: Internal Resources

Timeline: On-going for Measure B and beyond

Person(s) Responsible: Chief Technology Officer

6. *The District should continue to require the District CTO to approve all computer hardware and software purchases to ensure standards are maintained and new equipment is compatible with the existing environment.*

Action Plan: District ITS and District Purchasing instituted in 2006 an effective "check and balance" procedure for the purchase of all computer hardware and software district-wide. This procedure ensures that computer purchases adhere to the current district-wide equipment standard and that new hardware or software are compatible with the district and college environments for fault-free operation. In addition, the District evaluates whether the purchase is duplicated in other areas of the District where sharing can be achieved among the colleges for cost savings and operational efficiencies. Also, the District communicates to each college any innovations that are being achieved at the other locations for their consideration for future innovations. Since the implementation of this procedure, past problems have been eliminated and monitoring continues to ensure compliance to the ITS equipment guidelines. Finally, the District CTO works on behalf of the colleges with the vendors and Purchasing to acquire the maximum discounts and the best contract terms and conditions based on the District's vast experience with the computer products and vendor alliances. As the new Purchase Card is implemented over the next year to utilize credit cards for low dollar purchases, District ITS will work with the Purchasing Manager to develop new procedures to provide the desired flexibility and responsiveness while still maintaining the necessary controls for hardware and software purchases.

People Involved: Chief Technology Officer, District Purchasing Manager, Purchasing staff, District ITS staff, College Computer Support staff

Estimated Cost: Internal Resources

Timeline: On-going

Person(s) Responsible: Chief Technology Officer