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A FRAMEWORK FOR IT STRATEGIC PLANNING

Introduction

This document is a framework for developing information technology strategies and initiatives throughout the University of Illinois. It is designed to be part of the IT governance strategic IT planning process. This framework provides a means to work collaboratively to develop our IT goals, objectives, initiatives, associated metrics, and ongoing modifications to the framework.

Each of the campuses will utilize this framework in the development of their own campus IT strategic plans over the next year. This process at the campuses will be driven by the respective campus IT governance groups which are composed of faculty, staff, students, and IT professionals. The goal of this process will be to produce IT strategic plans that demonstrate how shared information technology can support the strategic goals of the University.

I am grateful that many people from across the University have contributed to the development of this framework, and I hope to continue to receive your feedback in the coming months.

Comments, questions, and other feedback regarding this document are welcome at any time.



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Strategic IT plans should have a statement of purpose, mission, and vision. The plans should follow a common framework with some shared elements. For the purpose of this framework we are using a model from MOR Associates¹. The common elements with their definitions are described below:

Mission: Refers to the business purpose of an organization. Mission statements usually answer three questions: What purpose does the organization serve? What products or services do we offer? Who are the customers we intend to serve? How do we go about serving these customers? What activities, technology, etc., do we provide?

Vision: A statement that creates a picture of the desired future state that is better in some important way than the current state. A vision statement usually addresses: What kind of organization do we want to be? What will it be like for our customers and other stakeholders when we achieve the vision? What values are most important?

Strategic Goals: An outcome that is measurable and achievable within a specific time frame. One, which is subordinate to the mission, yet supports the overall business purpose by addressing an aspect of it. Most organizations need to successfully accomplish many goals to achieve their mission. Note: In this IT framework document, goals are not defined and are intended to be developed at the campus and organizational levels.

Objectives: The IT areas of emphasis that connect back to each strategic goal. Objectives state that the IT organizations plan to continue to do quality work in these areas. These objectives are reflective of current activities as well as activities in which IT strategy should encompass.

Initiatives: The IT areas of emphasis that connect back to each objective. Initiatives are operational in nature and achievable within an expected timeframe and available resources.

Throughout the process of developing this framework, the participants created the below drafts of mission and vision.

¹ MOR Associates (2011), "IT Leaders Program", pp. 95

Statement of Purpose

Develop a framework for University of Illinois Information Technology Strategic Planning

This document is a framework for developing information technology strategies and initiatives throughout the University of Illinois. It is designed to be part of the IT governance strategic IT planning process. This framework provides a means to work collaboratively to develop our IT goals, objectives, initiatives, associated metrics, and ongoing modifications to the plans.

Mission

We provide a wide range of information technology solutions and services to the University community that are innovative, accessible, timely, reliable, accurate, efficient, and responsive to customer needs. We collaborate to proactively identify opportunities, mitigate risks, plan future initiatives, and solve problems by leveraging all of our information technology resources and knowledge.

Vision

To be an engaged partner within our University community to advance the institution's teaching, research, service, economic development, and administrative functions through innovative, cost-effective information technologies and services. We will be known for our leadership, integrity, and dedication to customer service.

Guiding Principles

An IT strategic plan should have guiding principles or themes. These themes would be pervasive throughout an IT strategic plan, and the individual objectives and initiatives could be viewed through one or many of these themes. Throughout the planning process to develop this framework, a number of recurring themes emerged based on conversations with individuals and stakeholder groups.

Save Time

One of the foremost goals of employing information technology resources is to save time for our users. When IT services allow people to perform tasks and processes more efficiently, it preserves their time to dedicate to other valuable tasks. At the University, this means that students have more time to study and participate in student life activities. Faculty have more time to teach and perform research. Staff can better support faculty and students when IT helps improve efficiency.

Preserving our time through IT services takes many forms. Systems are implemented to reduce administrative overhead, and everyone should be able to efficiently access the services available with minimal searching and with a single electronic identity. It should be easier to interact with information of all forms throughout the University, and creation of knowledge should be automated as possible.

Improve Communication and Transparency for IT Services

Communication between users and information technology professionals is paramount because users define their academic and business objectives and needs and IT collaborates with appropriate IT services to facilitate meeting those objectives. IT users are informed and aware of the processes and people who provide the services they need. It must be easy to find both central and local IT help and services. IT governance processes exist to provide a representative voice for users in making major IT investments, defining IT priorities, and providing performance feedback related to current services.

Ease of Use

Customers are increasingly interested in the availability of a portfolio of basic and expanded information technology services. All of the IT services that are deployed at the University are designed and maintained with an emphasis on the user's perspective of being easy to use. When services are not easy to use, or too complex, there is a disconnect between our users and providers of information technology, which usually results dissatisfied customers.

As we build or purchase new services to meet user needs, IT ensures that these services have a number of key usability characteristics such as:

- Familiar, consistent, and understandable terminology
- Easy to read and navigate
- Easy to learn and become easy to use
- Compliant with all accessibility standards
- Information is easy to find
- Suitable performance and load times
- Clear path for support

As a general rule, if services cannot meet these criteria, it may not be in our best interests to pursue them. In some instances, ensuring these criteria are met will make services more difficult or time consuming for IT units to maintain; however, the overriding concern is that it is better to constructively utilize the time of IT professionals if there is a net improvement in services for the end user and the University.

Improved Data and Analytical Capabilities

Our information systems process and produce a tremendous amount of data and information on an ongoing basis. These data should provide insight into everyday transactional information, but more importantly, should enable monitoring and performance measurement of our most important strategic goals. Information technology professionals must understand and fulfill data and information needs to support student success and campus success.

This may take the form of tools that help the University:

- Identify broken or inefficient business processes
- Measure learning outcomes and improve student success
- Assist faculty in the research process
- Understand the effectiveness of outreach programs
- Measure customer satisfaction and service levels

Collaboration

Collaboration is a foundational element of the everyday lives of the student, faculty, and staff of the University. All three of those groups collaborate amongst their peers and others across the University and worldwide. The methods and tools for collaboration continue to grow as digital capabilities expand constantly. Information technology provided by the University must enable collaboration, while increasing the ease and efficiency of the collaboration, and not cause more work in order for people to collaborate.

Another important area of collaboration is the partnership between IT professionals, IT governance committees and processes, and the constituents that these groups serve. Close collaboration between these groups is essential to facilitate shared decision-making, prioritization of initiatives, and the implementation of new and improved services.

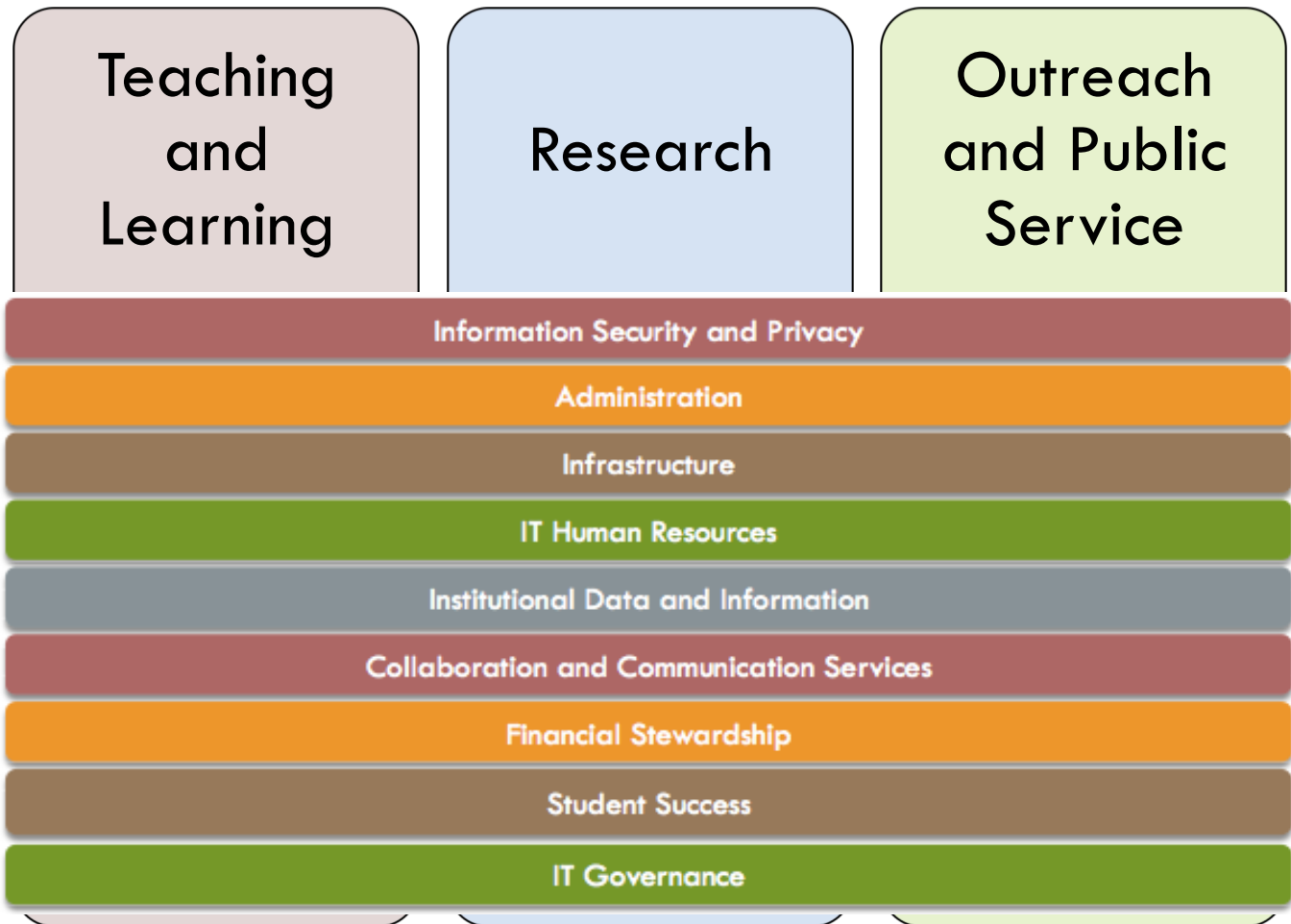
IT Governance

It is vital that IT investment choices are guided by stakeholders, support academic and business strategies, and ensure mission-critical items receive the highest priority. IT governance promotes the intelligent use of

resources, providing a shared, rational, and transparent framework for the selection and prioritization of IT investments. IT governance groups exist at all campuses, university administration, and at the enterprise level. These governance groups provide planning leadership for IT at the campuses and university. As representatives for the end users of IT, the governance groups must partner with constituents to describe user priorities and how IT can help them fulfill them. IT governance, in partnership with IT users and providers, should be an integral part of the planning process.

Mission Areas and Cross-functional Topics

On the following pages, this framework discusses major mission areas of the University and how IT may support those areas. After that, a number of major supporting cross-functional topics are discussed which are applicable to all of the mission activities and other University endeavors.



Research

Research efforts across the University of Illinois in a wide variety of disciplines increasingly depend on a robust and sustainable research-computing environment. These resources include technical support staffs who work directly with researchers as well as computing resources such as cutting-edge networking, high-performance compute clusters, large-scale data storage, data curation, specialized consulting, and other services. Other support includes improving research administration processes so more grants can be applied for, awarded, and administered with less effort.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Provide access to cyberinfrastructure *systems* for faculty and researchers to support computation and data-intensive research capabilities. For example, meet high performance networking needs of researchers, provide easy access to high performance computing and increased access to compute cycles, and provide ubiquitous, high-capacity data storage.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide access to contemporary and innovative cyber infrastructure *services* for faculty and researchers to support computation and data-intensive research capabilities.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Improve IT systems and services that support research administration.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide improved continuous communication and education for researchers in the University system to increase awareness of the computing resources available and facilitate communication between research groups.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Teaching and Learning

Our approach to pedagogy, when mediated by technology, should be part of the culture and the social contract we have with students. As a technology-rich university, we have deep knowledge and extensive IT resources that need to be harnessed to drive our ability to educate through and with technology. This includes online and blended learning methods to learning management systems, podcasting, digital textbooks, and other digital content delivery and collaboration methods. We must be proactive in anticipating emerging needs to support different approaches in teaching and learning. Our IT services must seamlessly connect students and faculty using modern communication, computing, and teaching tools, regardless of physical location and discipline.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Provide facilities and learning spaces technologies that enable and enhance the teaching and learning experience.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide technologies that enable students and faculty to access the services and information they need when, where, and how they are needed.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide services and technology support that enable and enhance the teaching and learning experience.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide technology tools and services to support faculty development.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Outreach and Public Service

Through public engagement and outreach activities, the University engages with the general public, donors, alumni, corporations, and future students. The University must provide a full range of IT services needed by faculty, staff and students to conduct seamless outreach programs using the latest IT tools and techniques that are regularly updated to reflect changing conditions and options. The public must be able to quickly and easily access appropriate university resources utilizing common tools already at their disposal.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Facilitate the use of technology by University partners so they can connect and interact with the University community and resources.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide technology services to organizations that are engaged in outreach activities to engage and inform communities, stakeholders, and citizens.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Use new and emerging technologies to place our knowledge assets in ways that will allow for the serendipitous discovery of the University.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Raise the profile of the University and its public service and outreach missions to help lead new audiences to the University of Illinois.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Information Security and Privacy

Information in all its forms is our currency and the source of underlying value we provide to the University. There is a significant value associated with our intellectual assets and institutional data that require substantial measures to protect. Safeguarding university information, assets, and stakeholders allows the University to concentrate on mission activities and operations. These efforts include improving the overall security and privacy of information at the University, appropriately balancing risk with safeguards, and ensuring security and privacy measures are appropriately supported, funded and implemented within the University.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Provide security services and architecture that provide a robust and secure foundation for information technology resources.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Protect sensitive information of all university stakeholders.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Develop and implement University and Campus level security policy and procedures.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Implement the risk management program for information security and privacy including appropriate mitigation plans.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding information security and privacy.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Administration

Administrative IT systems are utilized in areas such as student services, finance, human resources, facilities, advancement, and research administration to support the mission activities of the enterprise. It is important that our administrative IT investments improve efficiency and effectiveness and are informed by faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Provide enterprise solutions and common good services that are cost effective and provide excellent service to users.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide excellent customer service and support in multiple forms *utilizing* information technology resources as easily as possible to accomplish their goals.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Promote and support collaboration and community source initiatives to leverage tools already built.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Promote and support collaboration that capitalizes on successful unit-level administrative systems.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Support business processes improvement through IT tools and services.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Promote well-informed decision making through availability of timely data that is easily accessible by decision makers.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Administrative systems will be designed with easier contemporary standards for ease of use to minimize the training burden on the University.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Eliminate unnecessarily redundant systems.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Infrastructure

The University requires a foundational infrastructure of reliable information technology resources on which other systems and services depend. These infrastructure services must maintain a superior level of performance and reliability in order to support the mission of the University while being cost-effective, scalable, and accommodating to changing needs and technologies. The University will strive to provide a reliable world class high-performance network infrastructure to all campus buildings that allows for all users to access needed resources. The infrastructure should support the needs of both wired and wireless users for faculty, staff, students and guests.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Provide reliable, high performance network services.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide comprehensive Identity and Access Management architecture and services for the University to provide a cornerstone solution to manage the creation, maintenance, and use of digital identities.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide robust, accessible and cost efficient data center, storage, backup and business continuity/disaster recovery services including data security along with physical security.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide mobile strategy that meets the vision of the infrastructure and overall strategic plan.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide unified communications services (email/calendar/voice) to the University community.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

IT Human Resources

Information Technology Professionals at the University are our most valuable IT asset. These people provide front-line support to students, faculty and staff and are responsible for the day-to-day IT operations at the University. They are also responsible for fulfilling the strategic objectives and initiatives as outlined in this plan. Information technology professionals are aware and committed to the mission, vision and goals of the University. To that end they proactively engage in networking in order to exchange ideas, methodologies and leverage the expertise of their colleagues from central, college and unit level IT groups. IT professionals throughout the University share common characteristics. The University will strive to recruit, retain and develop the best IT talent.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Recruit talented people to provide IT services that meet and exceed the needs of faculty, students and staff.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Retain IT professionals by creating opportunities within units and departments that enrich their careers.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide professional development opportunities to IT professionals to help expand their technical skillset as well as their leadership qualities.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide an environment which facilitates the exchange of information and build environments where professionals can network, share tools, and work together on solutions.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Institutional Data and Information

There are a number of major classifications of data at the University including administrative data, research data, teaching and learning resources, creative works, and scholarly life. These data and information must be organized, formatted, and stored in a manner that makes them accessible where needed via the appropriate services or interfaces required to make them useful for different purposes. Decision makers and other information consumers at all levels of the University will have timely access to consistent, reliable, information that is relevant for their operations, analysis, and management needs. The various central offices charged with providing information will work together to provide information consumers with a seamless set of products and services to meet their information needs.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Provide business intelligence and performance management information to enable more informed and efficient decision-making.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Extend the centrally provided infrastructure to enable information producers in other central offices, as well as in local units, to produce visual summaries of information and other interactive displays. Also, provide Business Intelligence tools that make data easier to access and use for decision makers and other “casual” information consumers who do not have the time or technical skills to write their own queries or reports.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Foster collaboration between information producers within other central and local offices to reduce duplication of effort and improve consistency of information across providers and interfaces.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Because many information needs will continue to be met locally, increase efforts to support local information producers by providing additional Business Intelligence tools, standard data sets, training, and support for Business Intelligence communities of experts. Provide access to institutional data through multiple standard interfaces for use in unit production processes.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Collaboration and Communication Services

Students, faculty, and staff communicate in increasingly rich and sophisticated ways in order to collaborate with one another, to expand the reach and impact of our efforts, and to promote the University and its programs. As the pace of change grows and through a new kind of relationship with IT, the University will be able to leverage the interest and excitement of students, faculty and staff in making use of the latest technologies.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Offer scholarly support services to the academic community.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide improved communication and information to the University community to enhance awareness and increase usage of IT Services.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Improve the selection and implementation of new technologies with an ongoing, cyclical, approach that is fundamentally about good communication and building relationships.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Implement a new comprehensive model for multimedia services at the University.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Offer effective online collaboration environments for a wide variety of purposes.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Ensure ability to implement/deploy communications (and other) solutions quickly.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Offer a suite of integrated information, communications, and design services for developing robust online and print communications for the University, its constituent parts, and people.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Collaborate with partners internal and external to the University to enhance our information technology capabilities at the University, campus and unit levels. Provide information technology services that will support the goals of the University and these constituent groups.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Financial Stewardship

The University needs to realize the most value for its IT investment. Information technology is utilized to create efficiencies in business processes by automating operational functions. IT is also utilized to provide business intelligence to help us analyze performance and inform decision-making. An important aspect of utilizing IT is determining how we fund IT and understand how we spend our IT dollars.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Create a transparent, sustainable and responsible funding model that supports the University's information technology and telecommunication needs, creates new and improved services, and fosters innovation.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Utilize our IT in the most energy-efficient manner to minimize energy costs when possible. Leverage IT services to facilitate energy conservation in other operations.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Utilize information technology to increase efficiency and optimize university administrative processes to reduce the university operational cost.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Student Success

Ubiquitous information technology is an essential element in the lives of today's students. The University must provide students with services, tools, and timely information without boundaries to engender success at the University and beyond. These resources must proactively fulfill students' expectations.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Provide technologies that help improve student graduation rates from the institution.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Provide improved communication and information to the University community to enhance awareness and increase usage of IT Services.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

IT Governance

It's vital that IT investment choices be guided by stakeholders, support enterprise strategies, and ensure the most important items receive the highest priority. IT governance (ITG) promotes the intelligent use of resources, providing a shared, rational, and transparent framework for the selection and prioritization of IT investments. ITG processes exist at all university campuses and within university administration. These processes will continue to evolve and leverage one another in order to influence IT strategy and resource investment at the University. Effective ITG processes will help foster a positive and trusted partnership with the institution's stakeholders (teaching, research, outreach, and administrative functions) to collaborate on achieving the institution's strategic plan through the use of IT resources. A core tenet of ITG is the transparency it can bring. It will provide a process to coordinate with the institution's stakeholders to prioritize efforts most likely to achieve the desired benefit and tactically deliver value through the effective and efficient allocation of resources towards those efforts.

Objectives and Initiatives

In this framework, broad objectives are provided as examples. Initiatives would be developed in the IT strategic planning process to support the objectives.

Develop and promote IT governance that is empowered, accountable, and transparent in order to better support the mission activities of the University.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Develop the strategic IT planning process.

- Initiatives to be developed in the IT strategic planning process

Appendix A

IT Governance Committees at the University of Illinois

University of Illinois

University Technology Management Team

Chair: Walter Knorr, Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Comptroller

University of Illinois at Chicago

IT Governance Council

Co-Chairs: Pete Nelson and Terri Weaver

IT Governance Council Subcommittee for Administration

Chair: Dibyen Majumdar

IT Governance Council Subcommittee for Education

Chair: Saul Weiner

IT Governance Council Subcommittee for Infrastructure and Security

Chair: Mike Kirda

IT Governance Council Subcommittee for Research

Chair: Annette L. Valenta

University of Illinois at Springfield

Academic Technology Committee

Chair: Chung-Wei Lee, Chair, LAS

The Provost Team

Chair: Lynn Pardie

Dean's Council

Chair: Lynn Pardie

ITS Management Team

Chair: Farokh Eslahi

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

IT Executive Governance Committee

Chair: Paula Kaufman

IT Governance Subcommittee for Administration

Chair: Nancy O'Brien

IT Governance Subcommittee for Information Security/Privacy

Chair: Abbas Aminmansour

IT Governance Subcommittee for Outreach

Chair: Ann Abbott

IT Governance Subcommittee for Research

Chair: John Hart

IT Governance Subcommittee for Teaching & Learning

Chair: Nick Burbules

IT Governance Committees at the University of Illinois, *continued*

University Administration

Information Technology Priorities Committee (ITPC)

Chair: Michael Hites, Executive Chief
Information Officer, University of Illinois

ITPC Business Intelligence / Performance Management Subcommittee

Chair: Aaron Walz, Director of Decision Support, AITS

ITPC Human Resources Subcommittee

Chair: Tony Kerber, UA, Senior Director of HR Information Systems Strategy

University Administration IT Council

Chair: Michael Hites, Executive Chief
Information Officer, University of Illinois

ITPC Cross-functional Group

Chair: Michael Hites, Executive Chief
Information Officer, University of Illinois

ITPC Finance Subcommittee

Chair: Gloria Keeley, UA, Assistant Vice
President Admin Services

ITPC Student Subcommittee

Chair: Rod Hoewing, UIUC, Interim
Registrar

Appendix B

IT Unit Strategic Plans

University of Illinois at Chicago

Group Name

Link

University of Illinois at Springfield

Information Technology Services (ITS)

<http://www.uis.edu/informationtechnologyservices/about/splan.html>

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Campus Information Technologies and Educational Services (CITES)

<http://www.cites.illinois.edu/about/cites-stratdocs.html>

University Administration

Administrative Information Technology Services (AITS)

<http://www.aits.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=909813&pageId=910166>