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ABSTRACT

The Information Technology (IT) units at George Mason University (Virginia) work in a dynamic and exciting environment that puts a high value on excellence in IT programs and services. This paper shares some of the challenges of working in that environment and some of the strategies that the senior IT managers have developed to meet those challenges. Discussion includes an overview of George Mason University; structure of George Mason University's Technology Organization; issues in dealing with the distributed university; and strategies for dealing with the issues. The following strategies have been pursued by the IT units to respond to the needs of the distributed university campus environment: collaborative staffing and programming (projects and committees, IT training group, and support for statistical software); collaborative assessment and planning (departmental liaisons, facilities planning, service level agreements, and technology standardization); and collaborative budgeting. In their first year of working in a coordinated information technology-wide organization, the senior IT administrators have developed a good working relationship and have begun to put in place the collaborative planning and programming strategies that allow them to provide the best possible support for the distributed university environment. (AEF)

Collaborative Support for the Distributed University

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Collaborative Support for the Distributed University

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Abstract: The Information Technology units at George Mason University work in a dynamic and exciting environment that puts a high value on excellence in information technology programs and services. In this presentation, we would like to share some of the challenges of working in that environment and some of the strategies that the senior IT managers have developed to meet those challenges--collaborative staffing and programming, collaborative assessment and planning, and collaborative budgeting.

Collaborative Support for the Distributed University

The Information Technology units at George Mason University work in a dynamic and exciting environment that puts a high value on excellence in information technology programs and services. In this presentation, we would like to share some of the challenges of working in that environment and some of the strategies that the senior IT managers have developed to meet those challenges--collaborative staffing and programming, collaborative assessment and planning, and collaborative budgeting.

Overview of George Mason University

George Mason University is a relatively new institution. It began in 1957 with 17 students as the Northern Virginia two-year branch campus of the University of Virginia, offering courses in engineering and the liberal arts. During the first year of its operation, it was known as University College, but in 1958 UVA's Board of Visitors renamed it George Mason College. In 1966 the General Assembly authorized the expansion of George Mason College into a four-year degree-granting institution and gave it the long-range mandate to expand into a major regional institution of higher education. The first senior class received degrees in 1968. Graduate programs began in September 1970, with the first master's degrees conferred in June 1971. In April 1972, Virginia's Governor established George Mason University as an independent member of the of the Commonwealth of Virginia's system of colleges and universities. In 1979 George Mason was granted authority to grant doctoral degrees. In 1972 Mason enrolled 4,116 students. In the Fall of 1999 Mason has an enrollment of approximately 25,000 students (15,000 undergraduate and 10,000 graduate and professional). In addition, a significant number of Mason's undergraduates are upperclassmen, since Mason is a major transfer site for the five campuses of the Northern Virginia Community College system.

George Mason University, located in the heart of high-tech Northern Virginia, now comprises twelve academic divisions and has some 1,300 faculty, of whom more than 700 are full-time tenured or tenure track. Our academic programs include the range from liberal arts and fine and performing arts, sciences, business, law, information technology and engineering, to nursing and health sciences, education, and public policy. Our 107 undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs are "distributed" among three campuses in Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William counties, each with a distinctive academic focus that reflects the needs of its surrounding community and that plays a critical role in the economy of the region.

The Arlington campus, which includes the University's School of Law, focuses on law, law and economics, public policy, international commerce, and management of non-profit organizations

programs. The renowned James M. Buchanan Center for Political Economy is also at Arlington as is the National Center for Technology and Law, the newest addition to this campus.

The Fairfax campus includes the College of Arts and Sciences (the largest college in the University), the Graduate School of Education, the School of Information Technology and Engineering, the School of Management, New Century College, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and degree-granting institutes of the Arts, Computational Sciences and Informatics, Public Policy, and Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

The Prince William campus, which includes a unique partnership with the American Type Culture Collection, the world's foremost archive of living cultures, focuses on the biosciences, bioinformatics, and biotechnology, but is also home to other academic programs such as Administration of Justice, and Health, Fitness and Recreation.

In 1997, George Mason University inaugurated its fifth president, Dr. Alan G. Merten, a dynamic academic leader with a significant background in information technology. He has made the creative use of technology a cornerstone of his plans for the University's future development – in teaching and learning, in research, and in service and community outreach endeavors.

Reflecting the significant and still growing information technology economy of Northern Virginia, George Mason University is seen as a strategic asset both by Commonwealth political leaders, as well as by corporate and business leaders of the region. Such technology leaders as Oracle, Dominion Semiconductor, UUNET, MCI WorldCom, and AOL, all are headquartered or have significant presence within our service region. The current Governor of Virginia, James Gilmore, has publicly committed to making George Mason University a top-rank information technology higher education institution in the nation. More importantly, along with the support of the General Assembly, the Commonwealth has begun to provide significant base operating budget funding increases to make this a reality. We anticipate that when the phased, four-year funding enhancement cycle is completed, the University's base operating budget will have increased by more than $25M in real dollars. If not unique, this is certainly uncharacteristic of trends among publicly supported universities in the U.S. The most significant development of the increased funding thus far has been "The Technology Across the Curriculum Program" for all undergraduate students.

Unlike other university models where there is typically a main campus and branch or satellite campuses, at George Mason we conceive of our institution as being a "distributed university." Although it is true that we operate in a multi-campus environment, we do not conceive of any of our campuses as being more important than the others. At each of our three campuses, we strive to provide students and faculty with full access to all of the University's resources, while working to minimize duplication of programs and provide required support services through the use of technology. The Executive Vice President's main administrative role is to work with internal constituencies and community and business groups to further develop and sustain the distributed university model.

All in all, these factors make working at George Mason a challenging experience for the senior management of the Information Technology group!

Structure of Mason's Information Technology Organization

During the first year of Dr. Merten's tenure as President, the university's Information Technology organization was redefined, and Dr. Joy R. Hughes was recruited to serve as Vice President for Information Technology and C.I.O. George Mason's IT organization includes University Libraries, University Computing and Information Systems, the Instructional Foundation, and the newly-established Department of Instructional Improvement and Instructional Technology (DoIIIT). In addition, Dr. Hughes oversees the University's Process Reengineering Program – an ongoing effort that is being led by a distinguished faculty member from the School of Information Technology and Engineering.

University Computing and Information Systems (UCIS)

The University Computing and Information Systems (UCIS) department has grown substantially over the past decade. With the advent of the PC and vastly improved (reliability and speed) networking, the university has developed an insatiable appetite for scalable and adaptable technologies. As the university's central IT infrastructure support organization, UCIS has moved from mainframe to distributed environments and from supporting applications like central word processing to desktop distributed applications. As well, help desk functionality was non-existent in 1990, but has not only been established, but has grown into an 8-person department successfully answering an average of over 5,500 customer IT support calls/e-mail messages per month.

UCIS supports campus data, voice, and video networking between all campuses and off-campus facilities directly to the desktop. Full ATM capability is in place with high-speed Internet and redundant links established. Besides the backbone infrastructure, UCIS also supports residence hall data/voice/CATV services, productivity application training, university administrative systems, dial-in services, video streaming/conferencing, telephony/voice mail, web application development, emerging technologies, and central mainframe/Unix/Novell environments. Additional support is provided to Mason faculty and staff supporting (installation and repair) over 5,500 PCs and over 1,500 printers. UCIS staffing consists of 90 full-time staff and 15 part-time student and professional wage staff. Total budget is approximately $8.2 million plus non-fixed annual allocations for equipment and software refreshment and infrastructure upgrades.

Technical and management staff within UCIS are very active in regional and national associations and have been successful in increasing grant allocations and partnership with regional IT companies. Currently George Mason is working with Oracle, UUNET, GTE, and several other major firms to create new and exciting research opportunities and production services benefiting both entities directly as well as Commonwealth of Virginia citizens.

Additional information about UCIS is available at http://www.gmu.edu/departments/ucis/.

University Libraries

George Mason's libraries reflect the phenomenal, parallel growth of the University. The University's library started out as a small, two-story building in 1967, to which were added two five-story additions, one in the 1970's and the other in the early 1980s. This facility--Fenwick Library--continues to function as the University's main research library. In 1995, the Johnson (University) Center Library opened its doors, equipped with state of the art information technology and featuring very attractive open as well as group study spaces, occupying one third of the overall space of this new showcase building. Both the Fenwick and Johnson Center libraries are on Mason's Fairfax campus. In Fall 1997, the Prince William Campus Library was established to serve the academic needs of the brand new campus. In Spring 1999, two very small libraries were merged into the space vacated by the School of Law Library to form the now unified Arlington Campus Library. (The Law Library, which is administered separately, relocated into the brand new five-story School of Law building next door).

In addition to its obvious real estate growth, the University Libraries has grown significantly as measured by such indicators as operating budget (currently approximately $10M /year of which more than $4M is expended on information resources); staff (144 FTE of whom 100 are full-time positions, including 38 librarians); collections and information access (more than 800K volumes, some 1.5M microforms, more than 7K current serials subscriptions, significant holdings of government documents, maps, and special collections and archives, and access to more than 300 electronic databases, including full-text and online journals, of which a good portion is available through our participation in the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) Project and the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC). Besides the very important VIVA and WRCL affiliations, the University's current level of support for its libraries makes Gorge Mason a mid-range library among the some 45 members of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries.

Notable strengths of George Mason's libraries include a highly effective academic department liaison program; an active and much sought out library instruction program; strategic investments in information technology; high utilization of electronic scholarly resources; a highly responsive and

timely interlibrary and document delivery service, including office and inter-campus courier service; and, last but not least, ongoing overall University financial commitment to library programs and services (6.4% of E&G in fiscal year 1999-2000).

Additional information about the University Libraries is available at http://library.gmu.edu/.

DoIIIT

The Department of Instructional Improvement and Instructional Technologies (DoIIIT), the newest component of Mason's IT group, includes most of the instructional support for the University. DoIIIT manages all of the university's student computer labs and electronic classrooms and also handles the distribution of audio-visual equipment for classroom use. DoIIIT also provides training, mentoring, equipment, and facilities for faculty and students working on technology-related instructional projects through its Instructional Resource Center (IRC) and Student Technology Assistance and Resources Center (STAR). Through GMU-TV, DoIIIT also has responsibility for the production of instructional video materials.

Among the three campuses, DoIIIT manages 13 general University computing labs with more than 400 workstations. In addition, DoIIIT maintains four special, mentor-supported labs for students working on technology-related projects and a fully staffed instructional resource center lab for faculty. It also supports 19 electronic classrooms and 23 smart classrooms with enhanced presentation capabilities.

DoIIIT has a staff of 34 FTE in its five units. In addition, DoIIIT employs more than 100 students as lab assistants, office assistants and mentors in its various facilities.

DoIIIT has an annual budget of $2.6 million to support its programs and services plus non-fixed annual allocations for equipment and software.

Additional information about DoIIIT is available at http://www.doiiit.gmu.edu.

The Instructional Foundation

The George Mason University Instructional Foundation, Inc., is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 Virginia Corporation formed solely to benefit George Mason University both monetarily and with in-kind contributions.

The Foundation operates The Capitol Connection, a wireless cable system serving over 1,700 business and government patrons throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The service provides C-SPAN,

C-SPAN2, CNN, CNBC, the televised open meetings of The Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the National Transportation Safety Board. George Mason University televised graduate and undergraduate courses for credit are also carried on The Capitol Connection service. The Foundation holds over 20 microwave television licenses in the metropolitan area, and delivers George Mason University Television programming to cable system headends

in Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon and Prince William counties and in the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park, as well as the towns of Leesburg, Reston, and Vienna. The Foundation is also the sole stockholder of F Corporation, a for profit Virginia stock corporation which is licensed by the FCC to operate a C-Band satellite uplink from the campus of George Mason University which serves not only university users, but a variety of regional users including Fox Television, and the Arlington and Fairfax public schools.

In addition to its annual monetary and in-kind contributions to the university in excess of $1M/year, the Foundation brings goodwill and publicity to the University with some of the country's most powerful players, including the White House and Cabinet members and large law firms, trade associations, and major news organizations.

Additional information about the Instructional Foundation is available at http://www.capitolconnection.gmu.edu.

Issues in Dealing with the Distributed University

As the University grows, the IT units are coping with the classic problems of getting sufficient technology and staff resources to support it. While the University and the state have provided funding for technology infrastructure and equipment, they have not always provided adequately for the cost of academic support issues. The net effect is that the IT units have been required to stretch existing resources in order to respond, at some level, to increased service demands. This is particularly evident at the newer and still developing distributed campuses.

Fortunately, increased state funding has been established and targeted for use to address academic programs with a technology focus. This focus has allowed the IT units a greater opportunity to make the case, with some measurable success, for staff funding and program activities as well as directly supplying hardware, software, and other resources such as electronic databases.

Realizing the mandate of the distributed university, namely to provide an equal level of services to students and faculty regardless of physical location, the IT units must pay significant attention to access issues (including library resources and services, help desk services, technical support, training programs, computer labs, and electronic classrooms). Because the original Fairfax campus is the largest and most established of the three campuses, the challenge for the IT units, is to guard against peripheralization of the other two campuses. By ensuring that all campuses receive equitable services, the IT units are instrumental in achieving the overall mission and goals of a distributed university.

The balancing act of unified IT services involves both managing growth and realistically managing customer expectations. Increased budget allocations (for personnel and non-personnel needs) are quite beneficial; however, they also require strategic rethinking of organizational structures and relationships and administrative responsibilities. Combined IT resources become a more visible focus within the university community and may create unrealistic customer expectations about the IT unit's ability to solve the university's problems. As a result, the IT units need to carefully manage and communicate realistic expectations for IT support and services.

Strategies for Dealing with the Issues

The following strategies have been pursued by the IT units to respond to the needs of the distributed University campus environment:

Collaborative Staffing and Programming

1. Projects and Committees

The IT unit has developed some creative models for sharing staff including staff "loans" to another unit and jointly developed committees. University Libraries, for example, set up a joint project with DoIIIT to develop online learning modules in research skills. A librarian was assigned to work with DoIIIT instructional design staff. Similarly, a library staff member was loaned to DoIIIT to lead a project on information technology assessment in conjunction with DoIIIT's STAR (Student Technology Assistance and Resource) Center.

Furthermore, systems librarians work collaboratively with UCIS technical personnel on a variety of network support issues. And other librarians with well-developed computer skills assist UCIS with computer field troubleshooting and support, especially on the Prince William campus where currently UCIS is not adequately staffed.

The University Libraries recently underwent administrative and programmatic reorganization, placing much greater emphasis on staff involvement at all levels with planning, implementation, assessment, and

continuous improvement of its programs and services. Five standing groups were formed to provide team-based leadership for key functional and service areas of the library. In several instances DoIIIT and UCIS staff members serve alongside their library colleagues offering their expertise and helping the Libraries better fulfill their mission and role within the University.

University Computing and DoIIIT share responsibility for computer lab and classroom support at the Arlington and Prince William campuses since DoIIIT has, until recently, had no permanent staff assigned to those campuses. This involved setting up regular meetings of the IT managers working on those campuses to coordinate support issues and information sharing. DoIIIT staff work at the campuses when necessary to install and upgrade equipment. DoIIIT and UCIS also coordinate the training of student lab assistants so that the lab assistants on all campuses have similar training and performance expectations.

Another prime example of IT staff sharing and collaboration is Mason Web--George Mason's University-wide Web site. This project originally started out a library initiative and as the usefulness of this technology became apparent for all other parts of the institution, it was decided that there needed to be University-wide oversight of the project. The Vice President for Information Technology appointed a coordinating committee with representatives from academic and administrative units of the University. A librarian chairs the committee, with DoIIIT and UCIS staff also fulfilling leadership roles on the committee. A systems librarian serves as a technical support person, along with several UCIS staff.

2. IT Training Group

One of the most extensive collaborative efforts of the new IT unit is a joint Information Technology Training Group. In the past, a number of different units offered various kinds of technology-related training sessions and workshops. University Computing ran a regular series of application training sessions for office productivity tools. University Libraries set up sessions on the use of databases and Internet search strategies. The faculty development office offered classes for faculty in creating Web pages and the student technology support groups offered classes for students in multimedia applications.

The IT Training Group, coordinated by DoIIIT, includes representatives from University Computing, University Libraries, the Instructional Resource Center, and the Student Technology Assistance and Resource Center. In its first year, this group worked on coordinated scheduling of training events so that similar events wouldn't compete with each other. It also agreed on a specific division of responsibility so that two groups wouldn't offer the same kinds of classes. For example, the DoIIIT units agreed to offer PowerPoint training since they had the best staff resources for this, while University Computing covered the other standard office applications. University Libraries, on the other hand, concentrates its instructional programs on aspects of content, retrieval, and evaluation and use of information.

Besides working out these kind of operational kinks, the group also began to assess the type of training being offered at the University and developed some new models. They created a very successful program called BYTE Week (Build Your Technology Expertise) in which they combined their efforts to offer a weeklong series of classes in a wide variety of information technology applications. After its first iteration, BYTE Week was expanded even further to include collaboration with other University offices to offer dozens of sessions in both technology-related and non-technology-related instructional support. (For a look at this program, visit BYTE's Web site at http://www.doiiit.gmu.edu/byte/.)

The IT Training Group is currently working on a coordinated Training Web page for the University so that students, faculty, and staff will have one place to look for all IT-related training options.

3. Support for Statistical Software

The IT units were also able to address collaboratively the question of support for statistical software. DoIIIT and the UCIS Support Center got many requests for help with statistical applications such as SPSS and SAS, but because the requests frequently involved not just software expertise but statistical expertise, it was hard to provide a consistent source of support. Neither DoIIIT nor UCIS had staff specifically trained in statistics with time to provide consulting on research and analysis questions.

University Libraries, however, did have a staff person with the necessary expertise, but did not have any facilities to mentor and train faculty in the software. Faculty also needed to have statistical software available in the computer labs and electronic classrooms for demonstration work and class assignments. However, there were often problems with lack of standardization--which version of the software was available in which location--and how that coordinated with the version being used in the exercises supplied by various textbook publishers.

When the three units sat down to see how they could address this issue together, they were able to devise a plan for tiered support service which clearly defined the contribution of each unit and allowed staff in each unit to direct faculty and students to the appropriate place to get help. The support plan is online at http://www.doiiit.gmu.edu/spss.htm. The Web site developed for statistical assistance and resources is available at http://library.gmu.edu/~srs.

In fact, the recent announcement of this centralized service triggered a positive response from three academic units in the University providing specialized statistical research support (e.g., survey research, analysis of data sets) which is now leading to an even larger collaboration and leveraging of resources among academic units and the IT units.

Collaborative Planning and Assessment

1. Departmental Liaisons

University Libraries has long had in place a system of departmental liaisons to assist faculty and students in the academic units to make the most effective use of the library's instructional and research resources, and to have a point of contact for library services in general. This program has been highly successful and is serving the needs of both the academic departments and the libraries. This service model is also very appropriate given the increasing "digitalization" of the library's resources and services. It permits librarians to spent time and interact with faculty and students away from the library where many nowadays are increasingly doing their research by accessing library services and resources remotely.

University Computing started in the last year to assign field service technicians to particular customer areas, both academic and administrative and to establish liaisons within UCIS to each academic area. Some field service technicians were physically based in several academic areas, yet organizationally reporting centrally to the UCIS department. The remaining support areas were established using a zone methodology to ensure that technical staff gained understanding and visibility among a smaller area of customers. At an administrative/strategic level, UCIS also created a Director liaison program where each technical director was assigned one or two main academic units to interface with to ensure effective communications and joint planning.

This fall DoIIIT also initiated a departmental liaison project. However, since DoIIIT has a much smaller staff than either of the other main IT units, it was not possible to duplicate the level of service provided by the libraries or by UCIS. Therefore, DoIIIT's liaisons were instructed that their first responsibility was to make connections with the staff (i.e. the Library liaisons, UCIS field service technicians, departmental tech support staff) already serving each academic unit in order to be aware of what was already being provided and to make sure that the other support personnel were aware of what DoIIIT could provide to faculty and staff in the academic units. By making these connections, the IT units hope to enhance rather than duplicate services and leverage existing resources to the greatest degree possible.

2. Facilities Planning

One of the best ways to ensure effective support in a distributed campus is to involve the support units in planning new facilities from the beginning of the project. At George Mason, the IT units are currently part of the planning teams for new building projects at all three campuses. This means that professional IT staff have input into the design and configuration of classrooms, lecture halls, and support spaces along with the Facilities staff and the academic directors. This ensures not only that the IT infrastructure (wire closets, raceways, risers, etc.) is appropriate to the function of the building but that the building

includes space for the appropriate support staff and facilities in the appropriate locations. (For example, the technology repair area is near the service entrance and not in the middle of a block of classrooms.) It also avoids frustrating experiences like retrofitting a brand-new facility because no one thought about the sight lines for the new projector system or finding out that the new workstations aren't big enough to accommodate computers and student books and papers.

3. Service Level Agreements

Historically, departmental support for both faculty and staff was provided based on established expectations. Moving to improve overall service levels, the University Computing and Information Systems (UCIS) department established Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with major academic units (like the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Information Technology & Engineering) and some administrative departments. As well SLAs were established even within UCIS between different departments – such as between the UCIS Support Center (Help Desk) and the Local Area Network (LAN) department. These SLAs create a clear and definable baseline for service levels and ensure that services of the central IT unit know what to expect from UCIS, when to expect it, and what remedial actions should be taken should these service levels not be met. Development of SLAs also improves overall communications with customers of UCIS and creates important avenues for continued dialogue to greatly enhance overall service levels.

The tiered support for statistics, described above, was based in part on UCIS's model of the service-level agreement.

4. Technology Standardization

Over the past 9 years, George Mason University has slowly worked to implement technical and functional IT standards across all levels of the institution. UCIS has standardized on Nortel/Bay Networks data/voice/ATM infrastructure topology, Nortel telephony, Octel voice mail, DELL/Gateway PCs, and HP printers. As well, the institution has selected a common campus-wide e-mail messaging/collaborative application (Netscape Communicator), a common desktop productivity application (Microsoft Office), and selected and implemented a suite of common transport protocols. This level of standardization really helps with troubleshooting IT difficulties (limited finger pointing), customer usage training, Support Center (help desk) support, ease of migration/upgrade, installation/implementation of new technology, and effective site license contract negotiation. This initiative was implemented with direct input from the Mason customers (faculty, staff, and students).

Conversion and migration strategies to new standards came slowly since much of the install-base was in good working order when we initiated this effort. Mason worked out a plan to implement replacement strategies, to the new standards (when plausible), as equipment and application software became dated. All standards are now in place on centrally/UCIS maintained systems and networking.

Multiple levels of support are provided to all departments and students who use these centrally maintained systems and applications. Customers are allowed to purchase and install any desktop non-supported software and hardware in their offices/departments, but must support it themselves. Overall, the implementation of standards has been very successful and has succeeded in reducing overall service time-to-repair and IT support staff effectiveness and efficiency.

Following the same line of reasoning, DoIIIT has also used this strategy in defining which instructional software will be supported. WebCT, for example, has been implemented for course management, allowing DoIIIT to train its own staff and provide extensive support to students and faculty using the system.

Collaborative Budgeting

While each IT unit has its own independent operating budget, the IT unit submits one coordinated budget request for all IT initiatives and senior managers frequently discuss budget strategies.

This year, the IT group has adopted a new strategy in order to help manage expectations: tying budget requests directly to priorities set by the academic and administrative unit heads. The Vice-President for Information Technology asks these administrators for their priorities and needs in information technology and makes budget requests based on the input received. This year, for example, the deans of the schools and colleges and directors of the institutes gave a very high priority to implementing enterprise-wide email and collaborative tools and improving network services. These items, therefore, have been given a prominent place in the IT unit's budget request for next fiscal year so that it will be clear that IT money is being spent on the projects to which our clients have given a high priority.

In individual unit budgets, the directors also take pains to identify specifically funds allocated for specific priorities and projects. In DoIIIT's case, this means separating out all expenses related to the Technology Across the Curriculum program since this is an item for which the unit receives designated funding. The department wants to be able to demonstrate how the money is being spent and not just let it be buried in a large general budget picture.

In the case of the University Libraries, recent efforts to increase funding have been successful because of the pursuit of a differentiated, dual strategy: fashioning budget justifications on the basis of (a) academic program expansion, and (b) response to growth of existing programs. The establishment of adequately staffed and funded libraries in the distributed campuses (Arlington and Prince William) constituted an example of the former strategy. The development of these two new libraries was made possible through additional categorical funding, rather than cannibalization of the existing library budget. Similarly, as the University's existing academic programs have grown in students and faculty, the Libraries' budget is being augmented to address staffing and collections/information access needs.

Conclusion

In our first year of working together in a coordinated IT-wide organization, the senior IT administrators have developed a good working relationship and have begun to put in place collaborative planning and programming strategies that allow us to provide the best possible support for our distributed University environment. The kind of collaborations we discussed above enable the three main administrative units to act inter-dependently in areas where the needs, perspectives and expertise of the other units facilitate development of better programs and more effective coordination of services. This in turn, over time, fosters cultural organizational changes in each of the units. By bringing together librarians, computer and networking personnel, and instructional designers and technologists, we are better able to respond to the University's "continuum" of information technology needs for teaching, learning, research, and outreach endeavors. In our particular institutional setting, this driven-from-above collaborative approach is a somewhat new experience, certainly a different way of doing business, for staff in our respective units. Early indications point not only towards staff acceptance, but towards an eagerness and willingness on their part to work with colleagues from other IT units to solve shared IT-related problems. We're looking forward to what the second and future years have to bring.

EDUCAUSE *Information Resources Library*

Transforming Education Through Information Technologies

Abstract

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