

# Information Technology Services

2015 Annual Report



The 2015 Information Technology Services Annual Report

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and  
Highlights of the 2014-2015 Academic Year



# Information Technology Services

2015 Annual Report

## *Introduction*

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) embraces the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholar; Chancellor Debra Saunders-White often refers to these students as techno-scholars. To meet the needs of these students, a strong and strategic Information Technology unit is charged with providing service and support not only to students directly but to all campus members. In order to meet this goal, NCCU's Information Technology Services (ITS) has been strategic in aligning resources and enhancing services to focus on supporting our campus enterprise and our students.

Over the past year, ITS has examined that alignment as it relates to staffing and budgetary resources. While still faced with budget reductions, ITS has been able to fill key positions and provide technical and professional development opportunities for staff in support of key projects.

This Annual Report provides updates on the 2014-2015 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and examples of services and solutions that address the needs of our students, faculty and staff and the changes to higher education. It is important to note that every individual in ITS contributes to the mission of preparing students to become global leaders and practitioners who transform communities. Not only does ITS directly support students through the Eagle Technology Assistance Center, Student Computer Repair Center and library technology support, ITS assists faculty in their classrooms, staff in their offices and administrators as they develop efficiencies in business processes. The ITS approach to support and strategic planning remains focused on the student of today while also preparing for the student of tomorrow.

## *Student Support*



Students: Serviced 2,286 student computers

Students: Expanded student support by 20 hours per week

Classrooms: Upgraded five technology enhanced classrooms

Wireless: Installed 35 wireless access points in targeted residence halls

Wireless: Installed 20 outdoor wireless access points, completing outdoor wireless phase one

Donations: Received \$306,481 from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund for MS software to support academic and administrative computing



## *KPI – Implement improved seamless network registration system*

Students, faculty and staff expect access to information from almost anywhere, anytime and practically any device. Improved networks, wireless coverage and device registration systems on campus are integral to providing these services. NCCU's ITS unit successfully completed several projects to broaden access and implement a more efficient registration system. This registration system permits students, faculty and staff seamless access across campus to the wireless network. Students, faculty and staff no longer are required to log in daily or when moving from building to building. ITS also was able to get funding to expand outdoor wireless and provide additional wireless access points in academic and residential buildings. Knowing that simply providing wireless coverage is no longer enough, adding expanding its reach and ease of use became an important component of this KPI.

The impact of these initiatives on our students can best be summed up by former Student Government Association President Derrick Hicks, who said: "Coming in as a freshman in 2011, I can remember having to use the Ethernet cord. I can also remember how inconvenient it was to continuously have to log onto Cisco systems. Since the development of Eagles-Wifi, it has improved the speed of connecting not just my cellular device but also multiple devices. Eagles-Wifi has also improved the speed of being able to accomplish multiple tasks given by professors. Thank you ITS for making an improved experience in technology here at North Carolina Central University. It helps more than you know."

## *KPI – Implement new Voice over IP/Communications System*

NCCU's phone system was over 14 years old and was managed by the State of North Carolina's Information Technology division. The phone system did not provide the services, features or cost savings available with current communications systems. The NCCU ITS department worked collaboratively with State ITS and NCCU Administration and Finance offices to develop a transition plan that included: transitioning current contracts for dial tone



and maintenance; completing Request for Proposals (RFPs) for a new dial tone and hardware/software services for a Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP)/communications system; and, finally, identifying budgets and timelines for each step. The goals of the project included formulating a budget, developing a sustainable model for our communications systems and developing a comprehensive



communications-system strategy that leveraged existing infrastructure wherever possible. New system features were reviewed for potential impact on supporting student success and campus efficiencies.

The new communications system scheduled to be completed in Fall 2015 provides collaboration tools for traditional students, distance education students and non-traditional students. The communication systems also will provide unified messaging, video conferencing, instant messaging, free domestic long distance services, and flexibility in the ways and devices that can be used to stay connected and support student success.

Enterprise-ready video conferencing provides students, faculty and staff with the ability to establish a videoconference without ITS assistance. This also provides cost savings and efficiencies by consolidating various video-conferencing technologies, reducing travel where appropriate, and providing opportunities for group study or tutoring. These are just a few of the areas that should experience positive change as a result of these new technologies.

### *KPI – Create service catalog and communications strategy*

In order to provide ongoing and two-way communication across campus, ITS implemented several new communication strategies.

A services catalog provides the campus community and visitors the opportunity to view the services and applications available. Over the past year, ITS reviewed and updated its services pages on the website found at: <http://www.nccu.edu/administration/its/services/index.cfm>. In addition to ongoing website updates, ITS began distributing regular email updates as well as using the campus governance structure to provide updates and receive feedback.

As part of the 2014 Annual Report, ITS updated the campus on projects completed in 2013-2014. ITS continued to inform the campus of changes through CIO updates and ITS Communications emails. ITS embraced the use of social media by using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to communicate regarding changes to services and other issues. Forums for

### *Stats and Activities*



Supported 242 special events

Distributed 314 MS licenses to students, faculty, staff

Migrated 9,575 webpages to the new content management system

Completed 114 upgrades, patches and clones of enterprise systems

Created 277 SharePoint sites used by over 620 students, faculty, staff

Completed 55 projects creating efficiencies, collaborations, and upgrading systems



students, faculty and staff offered in spring 2015 provided ITS with an opportunity to share upcoming initiatives and receive feedback on existing and future services.

By using the existing campus governance structure, ITS has had an ongoing and consistent method for setting priorities and receiving feedback. The Student IT Advisory Council met twice per semester and provided input for printing solutions and quotas. The Enterprise Systems Council meets monthly and has determined ITS upgrade and maintenance windows for campus. The NCCU IT Planning Committee provided input for the development of hardware standards, a model for the classroom of the future, and website enhancements. ITS also uses a survey tool built into the ticket system to gather feedback on service calls. All of these, combined with formal and informal feedback from users, provides ITS the opportunity for continuous improvement.

### *KPI – Enhance student services*

ITS was able to expand services and collaborate with other divisions to implement new or improved services to support student success. Working with the Division of Student Affairs, ITS created efficiencies for student orientation, Residential Life, the Dean of Students office, Disability Services and Career Services by integrating and automating its systems to providing online and electronic services to students.



ITS and Financial Aid, a unit in Academic Affairs, developed an online scholarship application that created a process efficiency. Students previously were required to walk paper around campus but are now able to complete the application online. Student advising is critical to the successful progression of our students, ITS assisted University College in the automation of data integration for GradesFirst, a campus advising and student progress system. This automation allows for faster updates to student records and, consequently, students and advisors now are able to use more of the system.

Student success extends throughout all areas of NCCU, including athletics, where coaches rely on information technology in their support of our student athletes. By integrating student data with various technologies, coaches can reinforce student success by monitoring and facilitating student progress.

In addition to working with other units, ITS also has enhanced its existing programs and support services to further facilitate student achievement. Examples of these enhancements include: aligning staff schedules to provide expanded support during the open library hours; implementing discounted



distribution of MS Office and Windows to students both in-person and online; adding density of wireless in academic buildings; completing a first phase of our outdoor wireless project; and transitioning to an improved network registration system.

These are just a few examples of services and collaborations carried out by ITS. There are already exciting plans for additional technologies and services that will be implemented in 2015-2016. A sneak preview includes centralizing IT services for students, implementing the planned printing strategy, providing collaborative video conferencing to students, and conducting ongoing evaluation and review to further improve services.

### *KPI – Offer Microsoft to students, faculty and staff*

Students, faculty and staff want and need access to productivity software such as Microsoft (MS) Office outside the classroom, lab or office. NCCU ITS was able to leverage the UNC System and HBCU Thurgood Marshall College Fund MS pricing to purchase the necessary licensing to distribute MS Office to all students, faculty and staff either virtually or through license distribution at a nominal charge.



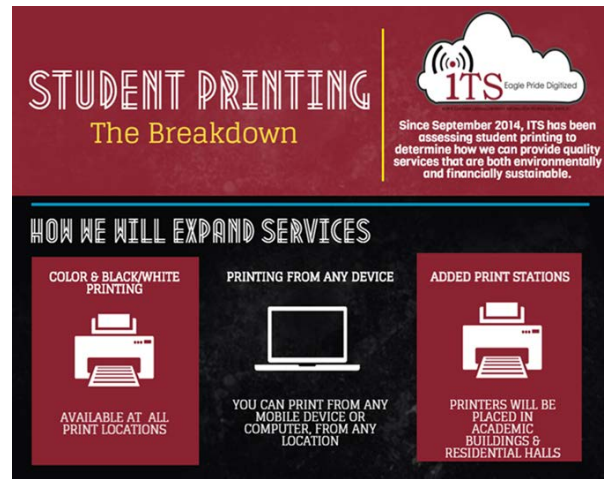
Students, faculty and staff can now purchase MS Office (or MS Windows) and install it on up to four devices. This adds flexibility to software that was previously only available on campus or with a university owned device. In addition to the value of being able to download and install MS Office, students, faculty and staff can go to the NCCU cloud, EagleApps, and access these same tools virtually. With these two options, almost any device can become an academic and productivity tool. The NCCU cloud option especially benefits those students who can't afford the nominal charge for software, as there is no need to purchase or install. They simply download a free app and launch EagleApps. This cloud solution has been extended to provide other discipline-specific software and is a growing environment.

The MS offerings and development of the NCCU cloud demonstrate the continual review and expansion or change of services based on the needs of that 21<sup>st</sup> Century TechnoScholar and those who support their success.



## KPI – Develop printing strategy

In 2006, ITS first introduced the idea of print release stations and student print quotas. At that time the campus was struggling with excessive printing of documents that were left in the labs by students and never retrieved. The pilot program never got off the ground but laid the groundwork for changing the student printing strategy. As NCCU has further embraced sustainability and made improvements to existing services, the importance of a more efficient printing strategy was seen as a critical initiative.



ITS personnel spent time researching what students printed, why there were so many pages left on the printers, and what solutions and allotments would work best. After a semester of research, a technical solution was found, and then ITS worked with the Student IT Advisory Council and Student Government Association to determine appropriate allotments (quotas). The solution that will be implemented Fall 2015 provides a sustainable approach to campus-wide student printing. Students also will benefit from the addition of printers across campus, including color printers.

## Other departmental highlights

In addition to the KPIs listed previously, ITS has provided other efficiencies, implemented new services and received recognition through a grant from MS for its commitment to student success.

Examples include:

- Refocusing resources by eliminating under-utilized open labs has allowed ITS to repurpose staff and expand services in the James E. Shepard Memorial Library.
- Changing the service model to support laptops in faculty/staff offices eliminated the need to deliver laptops to ITS.
- Purchasing golf carts allowed ITS to provide faster response to faculty in the classroom.
- Completing the implementation of the website content management system provided units the ability to update their content and create more dynamic websites.
- Implementing a solution for remote application support, installation and computer configuration management improved efficiency.
- Programming single sign-on for applications in MyEOL created a more seamless experience for students, faculty and staff.
- Incorporating Events Support Services into ITS strengthened audio/visual support for campus events.



- Implementing MS SharePoint for cross campus collaboration created efficiencies for processes such as the Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure process of Academic Affairs.
- Receiving a donation from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund in the amount of \$306,481 for Microsoft software helped boost support of technology for our 21st Century Scholar.

There has been a surge in the number of projects that interface with the campus enterprise system (Banner). From data integration to reporting, Banner is the campus system of record. The campus uses enterprise information to send data to external applications, reports for various external resources and/or enhance processes. Additionally, NC General Administration has implemented two UNC system-wide initiatives providing comprehensive data reporting. These include the Student Datamart, World Languages Consortium, HR Datamart and campus reporting. The role of ITS is evolving in these projects from service provider to partner/collaborator. To provide efficiencies in project management, ITS converted a vacant position into the unit's first project manager position. The position, along with an upcoming project management system, promises to bring transparency enabling improved decisions regarding project requests, timelines, staffing and workloads.

This Annual Report demonstrates ITS' commitment to being a robust service and solutions-oriented partner. The ITS staff and leadership have embraced these organizational changes and look forward to additional opportunities to support the strategic goals of NCCU.



## Campus Kudos



"...not only did you resolve a multitude of support issues and inquiries that had existed throughout the facility, all of your efforts were performed with painstaking meticulousness and care."

"He has gone beyond my expectations in resolving the issues with Microsoft suite on my desktop."

"I just wanted to take a moment to let you know the wonderful support we received from your ITS team this morning...with a last minute request. ."

"She makes our job so much easier whenever she is called upon."

"ITS personnel are doing a great job."