

## UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE GROUP EIGHT – ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology continues to transform the way in which we live our daily lives, and in the field of academia, it has the potential to alter teaching and learning methods with equal impact. Xavier University continues its efforts to enhance the functionality and usability of existing technology, while also remaining competitive through continuous exploration of groundbreaking technology for students, faculty, and staff alike.

The advancement of technology has implications on every facet of academic, administrative, and campus life activities; of which core systems have been implemented to facilitate the needs within each group. Xavier's existing technology is designed to provide enhanced teaching/learning resources and capabilities, while also offering efficient and effective systems to streamline campus life and academic interests, ranging from (*Please refer to attachment for complete listing*):

- Electronic Classrooms
- Electronic/Keyless Door Access
- Wired/Wireless Network
- Open Labs
- Library Electronic Resources/Databases
- Multi-Purpose Campus Card for Library, Dining, Vending, Laundry, Merchant, and Event tracking Services

There is a pervasive use of technology in every aspect of university life and administration. Students utilize technology in both academic and non-academic settings with services such as Blackboard, Banner Web, Webmail, and the X-Card to bridge the gap between academic information access and overall student life activities. Faculty members also perpetuate the advancement of technology by utilizing teaching aids and resources such as electronic classrooms, Blackboard, Banner, and Brio Web to transform the way in which professors teach and students learn. Staff and administrative technology such as Banner Systems, Kronos Time Management, Astra Reservations, TMA Maintenance/Management and EMT Retain, to name a few, are utilized to streamline internal processing and management for optimal efficiency. Xavier's commitment to the promotion of technology access also extends to Alumni through the use of Raiser's Edge for tracking donations as well as providing a means for Alumni information preservation, and to on-campus visitors by granting Wi-Fi network guest access.

Although Xavier continues to exhibit efforts in enhancing existing technologies and implementation of new systems, issues contributing to end-user utilization, awareness barriers, and university process efficiency have been identified and recommendations made accordingly.

## **Issues & Recommendations**

### **1. Creation of a Technology Advisory Board**

Presently, the university's mission critical applications are supported and maintained by OTA/ITC, along with e-mail, cable TV, telecommunications, the wired and wireless networks, including the internet, and all open labs. Largely due to the number of grants awarded to Xavier, sometimes technology acquisitions are made by departments in isolation. Similarly, on the administrative side, sometimes decisions have been made independently

In order for the university to optimize investments made by academic and administrative departments, as well as keeping all constituents abreast of emerging technologies, **we recommend that a Technology Advisory Board be formed (TAB)**. This Board should have representation from OTA/ITC, the VPAA Office, CAT, the Office of Administration, the Fiscal Office, Facilities Planning & Management, Student Services, and the SGA. The establishment of the TAB will eliminate duplication of effort and bring awareness to interested parties on campus. For example, if one department is using a tool that could benefit others, that knowledge would be shared with all academic departments. This does not preclude the occurrence that specific acquisitions may only be of use to a single area; however, the TAB will help to insure that technology decisions and purchases are made strategically.

In addition, this collaborative effort may accelerate the pace at which some projects are implemented when it becomes apparent that broader benefit can be realized. The TAB also gives Xavier a competitive advantage since it consolidates our technology focus to reap the greatest benefit from existing and emerging technologies.

### **2. More Electronic Classrooms**

Currently, of the approximately 140 classrooms, the University has thirty-seven electronic classrooms on campus. (See Attachment A) Of these, twelve are designated for discipline-specific uses or are designated as media rooms. According to the Registrar's Office, many faculty request electronics classrooms; however, these requests cannot be filled because of the shortage of such classrooms. In lieu of electronic classrooms, OTA/ITC, the VPAA's Office, and individual departments have purchased mobile media carts. In some cases, departments have multiple media carts to accommodate multiple faculty who need electronic equipment for the classes at the same time. Logistical problems arise when using media carts if classrooms are not properly equipped and if there are problems with the elevators.

Plans are that the OTA/ITC will add another four electronic classrooms, two in the Administration building and two at Xavier South during the fall 2008 semester. However, according to the Vice President of Facilities Planning and Management, electrical constraints preclude the addition of more electronic classrooms in the Administration Building. In addition, it is important that the University consider the use of more suitable desks that accommodate students having both a laptop and book or notebook on the desk. Currently only the Languages Lab, the CAT Teaching Lab, and certain labs in computer Science provide this type of access.

Ideally, it is important that 100% of Xavier's classrooms be electronic. However, since currently only about twenty-one percent of classrooms are electronic (seventeen percent if you discount the discipline-specific rooms), **we recommend that Xavier should double the number of electronic classrooms over the next five years.** This increase of electronic classrooms would create an atmosphere and culture that encourages the infusion of technology in instruction. Our existing wireless capability in all buildings on campus has laid the foundation for the increased use of technology in the classroom. Internet access alone in the classroom allows for collaboration with peers from anywhere in the world, creating a strong competitive advantage.

### **3. Electronic Door Access**

Security on college campuses across the nation has become an increasing concern, especially after several acts of violence ended in tragedy during class time in two high-profile cases. Xavier currently makes use of technology for security purposes in a number of ways. For example, the University uses the E2campus text messaging alert system, Blue Light emergency phones strategically located across campus, and the EMANS alert system for campus alerts and emergency situations. However, presently, there is no electronic access to buildings and electronic door access exists on Xavier's campus in only three places: OTA/ITC's Data Center, certain Mathematics classrooms, and the Computer Science Labs. This does not provide the security means to monitor building and critical room access.

Xavier currently uses the XCard system for dining, vending, laundry, and the library. This card system is currently underutilized since it can also be used as an electronic card key, providing additional security monitoring of buildings and selected rooms. The use of the XCard for building access would also provide convenience seen at other HBCUs. According to contacts made to Housing offices of thirteen HBCU'S, five use card only access, six use keys only, and two use both, meaning that some dorms use keys and others use card access. The more common usage in card access is having the card swipe the external door and a key to the individual dorm room. **We recommend that an electronic card key system be implemented.**

From a competitive standpoint, even selective card access to residence halls and administrative offices after hours would not only offer a convenience, rather than having to always have Campus Police open locked buildings, but it would illustrate that we are optimizing investments and utilizing modern technologies.

### **4. Streamlined and Effective Communication Systems**

Presently, there is no comprehensive collection of event schedules that would provide a complete list of activities and events on campus. **We recommend the development of an electronic means to display a comprehensive list of activities and events campus-wide.** This display would bring a greater awareness to students, faculty, and staff of campus events.

Presently, the Athletics Department has placed two flat screen monitors in the University Center and one in the gym with content that is not Xavier related. These monitors would serve as an ideal vehicle for a scrolling calendar, with official events highlighted in some way. In addition, the university has an event scheduling software application that is available online and captures those events that require a room reservation (see Attachment B). A comprehensive approach is needed that gathers event data from this system, as well as the Offices of Academic Affairs and

Administration to close the loop in the case of events that are not listed in the scheduling software. This constant “awareness” is a good starting point to engage all of the university’s constituents in events taking place around them. Sometimes events are open to the public, and greater awareness would probably lead to greater participation.

Currently, the University uses e-mail to send Xavier’s eBulletin, which highlights events that are specifically reported to the University Media & Relations, to all students, faculty, and staff. This weekly eBulletin has been designated by the University Administration as the official vehicle for communicating non-urgent announcements and information to XU faculty, staff, and students. A more prominent display of events in more locations would make it easier for students, faculty, and staff, in passing, to find out what is happening on campus. Even in the case of emergencies, these monitors would serve as effective instruments to communicate with our constituents.

The use of more effective communication systems will help the University provide a culture of awareness and inclusion to prospective and current students, faculty, and staff, and also to campus visitors, who are potential donors.

## 5. Training

Training is currently provided by the VPAA’s Office and CAT for faculty and by OTA/ITC for staff and faculty, as requested.

OTA/ITC has invested in CBT software for the university’s enterprise resource planning tool, Banner, for fundamental training. A sixteen-seat training lab operated by OTA/ITC to conduct/facilitate training is located in Xavier South. OTA/ITC has also developed customized documentation for one of the commonly-used modules in Banner, Requisition Processing. Additionally, based on responses to a needs-assessment sent to faculty and staff, OTA/ITC contracted with certified Microsoft trainers to provide beginner and intermediate course instruction in the Office Suite product line over the past year.

At the beginning of each academic year the VPAA’s Office provides a workshop for chairs in tools commonly used by them, such as Banner and Brio. CAT schedules workshops throughout the year for faculty on the use of Blackboard and other tools to infuse and enhance technology in instruction. In addition, all new faculty attend a Blackboard workshop as a part of New Faculty Orientation.

However, we recognize that the training currently provided to chairs should take place more frequently. We further recognize that training provided by OTA/ITC should be planned with input from the VPAA’s Office for faculty and Human Resources for staff. Since staff is hired on a continual basis, offering technology training for new staff is difficult. It is also important that this training be specific for the position being filled. **We recommend, therefore, that working with Human Resources, that a comprehensive technology training plan for staff be developed.** Incorporating training as part of the new employee orientation would be very effective. **In addition, we recommend that CAT, the VPAA Office, and OTA/ITC develop a comprehensive training plan for faculty, PIs and chairs. Finally, the needs assessment conducted by OTA/ITC should be done annually, typically at the beginning of the new**

**academic year.** This coordinated effort will better equip faculty and staff with needed tools to perform effectively and efficiently.

#### **6. Enhance Technology Resources for Faculty**

Presently, CAT provides a number of instructional resources to faculty who are interested in incorporating technology into teaching. **However, we recommend that the University hire an additional person in CAT who will serve as a resource person for faculty. This person will identify emerging and existing discipline-specific technologies to assist faculty in enhancing the classroom experience.**