

FOREWORD LETTER from CHAIRS

Chief Information Officer Voss,

As Chairs of the five IT Foundations Task Forces, we are pleased to present you with the *Flagship Information Technology Strategy*, as the strategic plan for information technology at LSU. The Plan's title continues—*Supporting LSU's Advance to National Prominence*; a fitting addition in that we truly believe that the plan fully supports and enables the University's progress on achieving the broader goals of the Flagship Agenda. We feel this plan correctly and completely articulates a vision for the advancement of information technology at LSU, and see it as the definitive blueprint for actions in the years ahead—for you as the University's Chief Information Officer and Information Technology Services, and especially for all members of the campus community and university administration.

The Task Forces were charged with detailing a comprehensive set of outcomes—what we as a community believe is needed in terms of IT enablement—as well as the reasons behind the need for these outcomes. We have done so, and the Flagship IT Strategy provides an organized view of these required outcomes, presented in ten recommendations which are detailed by 84 specific action items. None of these recommendations are more important than any of the others and all are required to meet the goal of IT excellence that ultimately promote success with the Flagship Agenda. Thus, as implementation advances, attention must be paid to obtaining results across all areas, not just some.

A common theme emerged from all the task forces: the concepts of more modern and life-cycle replaced individual computers, abundant access to resources, and more support for the use of IT are the basic underlying components of broader success. These are the foundations of IT at LSU, and we can't expect faculty, students, and staff to effectively use all of the planned IT enablement if they do not have reliable access to modern, well-supported basic equipment and software. We expect progress to involve a phased implementation, over the next several years, done in a cohesive manner. The Flagship IT Strategy is an immense plan and there is no expectation that it will be completed immediately. We understand that completion will take time and commitment. Let us take a moment to reflect on that last word – *commitment*.

First and foremost, we believe the campus community is committed to the realization of the vision articulated in this plan, as it was composed by representatives of that community. We believe our commitment these past several months to the articulation of the Flagship IT Strategy reflects in thoroughness of the final product. But commitment to create such a plan is by no means the end of the process. There needs to be commitment to its implementation by this same community who created the plan. The key to maintaining our commitment is progress in terms of a steady stream of component successes. If progress materializes in the areas detailed, the campus community's commitment to its complete implementation will only grow stronger, gathering momentum as results are delivered. We understand that this commitment must continue on our part, but point out that other commitments are required to ensure the community's ongoing support.

We expect commitment of the CIO and all the resources at your disposal to go into implementing all components of this plan, and that it will absolutely define the course of all actions taken by you and the ITS organization. Without your continued commitment to ensure that resources within your control are dedicated to implementing this plan—and not diverted into non-strategic or ad-hoc activities—it will suffer the fate of its many predecessors. We are extremely encouraged by the level of commitment you and ITS have shown in the past year, and are thus have growing trust and building optimism for your commitment in the future. But we would be remiss if, in congratulating you on your vision, energy, and actions, we did not state directly we believe its continuity to be the most key element for success. You have stated often that the full implementation of this plan requires ownership of its elements by all of the LSU community—not just the CIO and ITS; and you are correct in this assertion. But it is an unequivocal fact that the community and administration view you as the lead advocate for broad IT enablement at LSU. Thus, your commitment to the Flagship IT Strategy must continue to be strong, vital, and unwavering.

Administration at all levels must also make a commitment to implementing this plan. Without that commitment—and the eventual funding that such commitment would produce—the plan will never be fully

realized and will suffer the fate of previous failed or abandoned efforts. We are quick to point out that many of the action items in this plan require no additional funding—they require only changes in policy, process, or attitude; or those things plus a refocusing of existing resources and energies in direct alignment with the plan. But following your charge, we have prepared this plan without constraints of a specific budget, so as to present a vision of what is needed to make LSU nationally prominent in the use of information technology to support advancement of the Flagship Agenda. Full implementation will certainly call for increased levels of expenditures, both inside ITS and more broadly across the campus. LSU must come to grips with the real cost of information technology—in equipment as one would expect *and especially* in people that support and advance its use. We can only achieve national prominence by seriously addressing the funding shortfall—whether through better efficiencies, reallocation, or the addition of new funding sources. This is also in line with the vision of the Flagship Agenda.

In closing, we believe this process has stirred the campus to this call to action. We are counting on you to continue your commitment to see this process to its ultimate and successful end.

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