

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Flagship Information Technology Strategy (FITS) marks the LSU community's efforts to define the future development of information technology (IT) for LSU. A companion document to The National Flagship Agenda, FITS delineates the University's vision for achieving national prominence through IT enablement. FITS calls for the establishment of an IT-abundant campus, and for the IT resources to facilitate the progress of LSU's students, professionals, and faculty within their respective disciplines.

A series of focused, brainstorming sessions generated ten recommendations and eighty-four action items. The ten recommendations that emerged are:

- I. Build a solid foundation of IT infrastructure at LSU that is modern and kept up-to-date
- II. Make significant strides in increasing the accessibility of the LSU community to IT infrastructure and services
- III. Develop a robust, multi-tiered support enterprise to meet the varying levels and specific needs of the LSU user community
- IV. Develop sound fiscal planning for IT that leverages LSU's existing investments, increases those investments in creative and innovative ways, and expends funding resources in the most responsible and efficient manner
- V. Secure LSU's IT infrastructure, safeguard the integrity of LSU's information resources and the privacy of its user community, and ensure the continuity of LSU's IT infrastructure and information repositories in the face of possible disaster scenarios
- VI. Develop robust and plentiful IT resources to enable research at LSU
- VII. Develop robust and plentiful IT resources to enable faculty teaching and student learning at LSU
- VIII. Develop sound information systems featuring a rich set of applications and tools that address the increasing need for more effective and efficient institutional processes and provide for advanced academic analytics at LSU
- IX. Support LSU student use of IT, not only as a tool in their learning, but to enrich their life experiences at LSU
- X. Develop IT advisory and communication channels to ensure the continued involvement of the LSU community in the implementation of the Flagship IT Strategy and ongoing day-to-day provision of IT services to the campus

The action items, while organized according to recommendation area, actually entail several other themes that emerged during this process. These themes, while broad in scope like the empowerment of the IT user and leveraging of resources, manifest into the specific, identified, needs of the user groups within LSU. While everyone would benefit directly from a modernized infrastructure, ubiquitous access to IT resources, and robust, ever present support, the day-to-day realization of IT as presented in FITS will differ for instructors, IT professionals, researchers, staff, and students.

Instructors

Providing an IT abundant environment for teaching by increasing the accessibility of IT infrastructure and services (Recommendation II) on campus, at home, and on travel are major objectives of the FITS plan. Improved e-mail services, document sharing tools, a ubiquitous wireless network, and compatibility and service to mobile devices will take these technologies to the levels that enable efficiency and effectiveness in teaching. Training and 24x7 support for these services as well as technology-enabled classrooms and labs are priorities of the Flagship IT Strategy. Specialized centers for training and support as well as vendor-provided and locally-produced documentation will support robust computer literacy (Recommendation III). Faculty technology should be provided in a life-cycle replacement funding model and a standard budgeted amount should be earmarked for technology each year (Recommendation IV). Recommendation VI specifically addresses the research expectations associated with University faculty appointments. In Recommendation VII, the Flagship IT Strategy sets objectives for teaching and learning.

IT Professionals

Maintaining a modern, up-to-date infrastructure (Recommendation I), increasing the accessibility of IT infrastructure and services (Recommendation II), developing sound fiscal planning for IT (Recommendation IV), and the continued involvement of the LSU community in the implementation of the Flagship IT Strategy remain key areas of interest to LSU IT professionals. A modernized infrastructure and sound fiscal planning for IT will greatly impact the day-to-day support provided to LSU. No longer would professionals need to rebuild desktops. Instead, an IT abundant environment means different challenges for IT professionals both within central ITS and dispersed among the departments. Recommendation III calls for the development of a robust, multi-tiered support enterprise to meet the varying levels and specific needs of the LSU user community. Strong departmental support coupled with a supportive, centralized ITS should provide the leveraged support needed. Integral to this growth are acquiring new skills, engaging in dialog across units, and, together, securing the integrity of LSU information and systems (Recommendation V).

Researchers

FITS seeks to empower researchers and research computing at LSU. Key investments in infrastructure (Recommendation I), accessibility (Recommendation II), and support (Recommendation III) will go a long way to enriching the University's research environment. Through the leveraging of key resources and through centralized IT investments (Recommendation IV), researchers would be assured of a standard level of hardware and software, and be able to spend more of their research dollars on advancing their disciplines.

For researchers, FITS means building IT abundance---a robust network, plentiful computing cycles, and document-sharing tools. Additionally, the investment in specialized support and training would alleviate the technical roles researchers take on in training their students and staff in specific technologies. Recommendation VI specifically addresses development of IT resources for research.

Staff

FITS seeks to empower LSU staff whether it is through enabling work from home or providing IT support for a late night project. A modern, up-to-date infrastructure (Recommendation I), increasing the accessibility of IT infrastructure and services (Recommendation II), a multi-tiered, leveraged support model (Recommendation III), life-cycle replacement of personal computing devices (Recommendation IV), and the continued involvement of the LSU community in the implementation of the Flagship IT Strategy (Recommendation X) remain key areas of interest to LSU's employees.

Students

The Flagship IT Strategy (FITS) seeks to empower students' living and learning by providing not simply an IT abundant environment, but the skills and training needed to succeed in the IT enabled workforce. Basic investments in the IT infrastructure to include the creation of a fully wireless campus, robust network access and e-mail services, modern equipment, and integrated mobile technologies (Recommendation I) will create an IT environment at LSU in which students can succeed.

Recommendation II will ensure that LSU students have the access to software, hardware, and other technology resources they need. Recommendation III ensures that they will have the support and tools to use IT while Recommendation V protects their identities and information from unauthorized use. Recommendation VIII provides for information systems applications geared toward forwarding student academic progress. Recommendation VII and Recommendation IX are specifically relevant to the student experience.