

PREFACE

It is fitting that the opening of LSU's National Flagship Agenda references the technology revolution that has transformed our world. LSU is creating a similar revolution of pervasive change and advancement. Information technology has truly transformed the world, and is today—and will be even more so in the future—a critical, strategic part of transforming LSU. Recognizing the link between information technology (IT) and the transformation of LSU into a nationally prominent flagship institution is key to understanding the need for articulating a vision for provision of IT infrastructure and services in support of the University.

*Make no little plans:
They have no magic
to stir men's blood.*

-Daniel H. Burnham,
Architect and City

Universities have always been defined by two key features – *the creation of new knowledge and the sharing of information*. In the Twenty-first Century, information technology is a key strategic asset of the University as it advances both roles. New knowledge is no longer created in the isolation of an individual lab by a single researcher or small team; it is created in virtual environments that span dozens, even hundreds of partnering researchers, located anywhere and everywhere. Today—and more importantly, in the years ahead—new knowledge will be advanced through the application of cutting-edge information technology tools, such as high performance computing, and done so in nationally (and worldwide) collaborative environments supported by institutions connected to the growing national and global cyberinfrastructure. It will be shared with others also making use of information technology enabled environments—whether that be advanced visualization resources, classroom learning environments, online learning systems, or leveraged use of a pervasive information technology environment by everyone, everywhere.

For these reasons, information technology today is as strategic an asset to the University as its buildings and campuses, its funding and financial resources, its curricula, its research, and its faculty and students. Information technology enables our professors to teach more effectively, and provide richer and broader pedagogy. Information technology enables our students to learn faster and better, and acquire new skills more effectively. Information technology enables our scientists and researchers to open up new frontiers of knowledge, and expand and detail older ones. Information technology enables the enrichment of the student experience at LSU, providing the underlying infrastructure that links learning and life. Information technology enables our institutions to be managed more efficiently and effectively, through the prompt processing of data and the access to information that improves the quality of our decision making.

In order to transform LSU, we must transform our view of information technology. We should set out to transform LSU from a university that simply tolerates technology, to one that truly embraces it as an enabler of teaching, learning, research, student experience and operational productivity. We must be motivated by the understanding that information

technology is a critical, strategic tool; to be a great university of the future LSU must have an exemplary IT infrastructure, plentiful IT resources, excellent IT services, and we must embrace the use of IT and technology more broadly.

This embraced use and provision of information technology has at its core a primary concept – IT Abundance. Within prudent and reasonable resources, and in line with institutional priorities, LSU should seek to provide an environment that features IT that is advanced, current, and readily available to the campus community in support of their achievement of the broad and varied missions of the institution. LSU has set for itself the goal of national prominence, via the Flagship Agenda. In similar fashion, it must set for

*A rock pile ceases to be
a rock pile the moment a
single man contemplates
it, bearing within him
the image of a cathedral.*

-Antoine de Saint-Exupery,
Aviator and Writer

itself the goal of providing the excellent IT infrastructure and service environment that, too, achieves national prominence. LSU should seek to be a national leader in the creative use, application, and provision of IT—as doing so enables every other facet of the Flagship Agenda.

How do we at LSU advance such a goal? First off, a careful planning process is undertaken to develop the “blueprint” for IT excellence.

Careful planning and stewardship are not new concepts to LSU; we have built one of the most beautiful and impressive campuses in the nation by virtue of planning and attention to implementing a master strategy. Thus, in support of the Flagship Agenda, we need a Flagship Information Technology Strategy to set a course for progress.

The Flagship Information Technology Strategy (FITS) is a thought-provoking list of outcomes describing the LSU community’s vision for an IT environment that enables the overall success of the Flagship Agenda. It is, very much, a companion document to the LSU Flagship Agenda providing a delineated analysis of the IT component of advancement. The FITS will serve as the master plan for the entire campus community as we carry out its action items over the next five years. And it is not just a strategic plan for the University’s Chief Information Officer and the Information Technology Services organization—it is a plan for all of LSU; the community crafted the plan and is a vital partner in its adoption and implementation.

The FITS deals with the “what” and the “why” of planning LSU’s IT future. It defines outcomes that the campus community wants to see in advancing IT abundance, and describes the value of these outcomes with reasoned justification. It is not a technical document, as it shies in large part from technology specifics. While technology is ever-changing, the problems to be addressed are relatively longer-lasting, and are met by developing technologies. The FITS shies away from discussions of priorities as well, even though priorities are a fact of life in higher education and at LSU in general. But the idea is that we should not dwell on the order in which we make advancement—and that we simply must address advancement—in whatever measure we can—in all areas, and not just a few.

The Flagship IT Strategy is a large, detailed, and complete planning document, developed by the LSU community. As such, it has the capability to stir this community to action. It establishes the vision of the community for what information technology at LSU could be, and thus enables us to begin to assemble the various pieces of raw materials and resources at our disposal, and those we will acquire in the years ahead, into a cohesive and impressive asset. It serves as a roadmap toward IT excellence, which through implementation of its individual action items will make the provision of quality IT infrastructure and services a habit at LSU, not just a single or ad hoc series of acts. Our goals are ambitious, but achievable.

*We are what we
repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not
an act, but a habit.*

-Aristotle,
Critic, Philosopher,
Physicist, & Zoologist

The Flagship IT Strategy recognizes that information technology is vital to the transformation of LSU into a nationally prominent flagship institution, in that IT enables the very heart of such a transformation—research and economic development, teaching and learning which benefits both graduate and undergraduate students, and facilities and quality of campus life. It answers the call to action in the National Flagship Agenda.