

Presidential Focus on Information Technology
Distributed to Leadership Council
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Introduction:

With the removal of IT funding from the “green sheet” and with ongoing pressures on campus budgets there is some worry in the IT community that Presidents may disinvest in technology. To help address this concern we offer to the Presidents these areas of inquiry related to effective executive oversight for IT. This outline is not intended to be a checklist that is delegated within the organization. Instead, it can form the basis for dialogue and planning amongst the leadership team. Specifically, what should Presidents want or need to know about the condition of IT on their campuses?

Best practices for Presidential focus on Information Technology (the four Cs)

1. Capability

- a. Does the institution have the IT ability to provide a supportive educational environment?
 - i. Student services
 - ii. Teaching and Learning
 - iii. Back-office administrative services
 - iv. Social media, public relations, and fund-raising
 - v. Development of benchmarks, metrics or other evidence of capabilities (for one example, does the President have an approximate idea of the percent that IT expenditures represent compared to total institutional budget? And how this figure compares to peer institutions?)
- b. Is the institution using technology to improve and innovate core business processes?
 - i. Mobility is a key area for innovation (this includes devices such as Android smart phone, netbooks, iPhone, and iPad)
 - ii. Analytics is a key area for competitive peer evaluation and institutional improvement
 - iii. Green computing is an emerging best practice
 - iv. Cross-institutional projects for shared services

2. Capacity

- a. Does the institution have sufficient capacity to allow technology to be leveraged to accomplish institutional mission?
- b. Does the institution look for low-cost, high-quality sources such as central service providers (OoC), other institutions within the System and/or 3rd party providers?
- c. Has the institution planned for business continuity in face of IT disruption?
- d. Is disaster recovery and business continuity based on realistic assumptions? Have the plans been tested?

3. Compliance and internal controls

- a. Are the information technology networks and applications secure from unauthorized access?
- b. Does the campus use identity management process to ensure you know who is authorized to access what technology services?
- c. Does the institution have awareness and response plans for any security and technology audits? When was the last comprehensive institutional technology audit? What were the results?

4. Collaborations and alignment

- a. As you invest in IT, do you actively align with strategic plans?
- b. What are your priorities for investment in IT and how are those priorities chosen?
- c. Are you actively forming partnerships to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of technology deployment?
 - i. Externally such as vendors and community members
 - ii. Internally by mobilizing talent and funding for projects
 - iii. Fostering collaboration across the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system
- d. Are you involving (and developing) your CIO as a participant in strategic planning and execution?
 - i. Does the CIO have clearly defined access to the President and other cabinet members?
 - ii. Is the CIO positioned to support institutional change?
 - iii. In times of budgetary constraint, does the CIO participate in realigning the portfolio of institutional initiatives?
 - iv. Is the President committed to professional development for the CIO and IT staff?
- e. Have you established the functional role of a campus information security officer? Have you considered if the role is staffed adequately and if the reporting structure allows objective analysis of your situation?