DoIT Responses to the IT Restructuring Work Group Report

Provost Hirshman recently announced the final report of the IT Restructuring Work Group, which reviewed campus practices and compared UMBC's IT services and costs to our peers. In addition to identifying potential cost savings and efficiencies, the Work Group recommended further study by the IT Steering Committee. To help, DoIT has worked with the IT Steering Committee and developed a set of initial priorities that complement key trends occurring in higher education IT:

Alignment with Major Technology Shifts

Three major shifts are occurring that are interconnected:

1. **Consumerization of IT**, such as student ownership of computers. Data show 95 percent of freshmen bring a laptop and 99% own a cell phone. How do we leverage student technology ownership?

2. **Internet everywhere**. A second shift is ubiquitous Internet connectivity: our students, faculty and staff want access to resources wherever they are located via broadband, wireless, or cellular networks. As a result, new devices such as the iPhone and iPad use the Internet as the operating system.

3. **Cloud computing** or virtual services allow UMBC to seamlessly provide services via third parties such as Google and Microsoft. Leveraging tools such as Microsoft Live@EDU or Google Apps for education allows you to have access to your information from anywhere.

These three combine to say that students want to access information from any device, any time, and anywhere.

Developing and Retaining IT Staff

Staffing is the single largest cost in delivering IT services and the most critical to user satisfaction. Approximately 60 percent of the IT staff that work at UMBC work in DoIT, the remaining 40% work in departments. We also know from the data that UMBC is not over-staffed and that all departments are under intense pressure to provide adequate IT support. This will likely be amplified over the next few years with the building of the PAHB and the increased use of technology for instruction, research, and administration. The most important activity we can do over the next few years is to develop programs that will build better alignment between DoIT and departmental IT staff. As the report suggests, we need to explore new staffing models to better align DoIT and departmental IT staff efforts.

With these trends in mind, DoIT proposes the following priorities based on estimated cost savings and/or time required to design, develop, implement and evaluate them:

1. Move student email to Google or Microsoft (Fall 2010)

Student feedback to the proposal to move to Google was highly favorable and discussions with faculty groups have expressed support. While our preference is Google, if we can't resolve the issues with the contract, we can have a contract vehicle for Microsoft. The cost savings grow over the next three years and we don't have to invest in new hardware for the UMBC mail server environment. Running the mail environment for the students costs UMBC an average of about $15 per user/year. This covers 1 FTE and $100,000 in hardware (we spent about $300K every 3 years for student email). This action is in line with the concept of outsourcing possibilities highlighted in the IT Work Group report.

Savings:

FY11 - .5 FTE (little hardware savings because mail system was redesigned in FY10).

FY12 - .5 FTE and $100,000 in hardware.

FY13 - .5 FTE and $100,000 in hardware.

Note: Based on the Fall 2010 student pilot, DoIT will make a recommendation to the IT Steering Committee about the feasibility and potential cost savings for outsourcing faculty/staff email as well.

2. Reduce computer labs by establishing recommended laptops for students and launch the Virtual Computing Lab (VCL) pilot (Fall 2010)

Data show that 95% of entering students in FY09 owned a laptop. Except in Visual Arts, no department provides specific recommendations for student purchases. Where appropriate, UMBC should examine how it can reduce the number of student computer labs and leverage student-owned technology.

One way of creating leverage is through a VCL implementation. VCL means "Virtual Computer Lab" and was developed at NC State. This allows student-owned laptops access to specialized software now found only on our labs. This could potentially turn any classroom where students have their laptop into a computer lab, freeing up existing lab space and costly replacement of workstations. UMBC has purchased the initial hardware for a trial. UMBC should launch a pilot implementation focusing on statistics and mathematics software where students must now use our computer labs. Long term expansion of VCL does require additional funding but might be cost effective if it frees up rooms now dedicated to computer labs to be classrooms.

Savings:

FY11 - None (we won't reduce our labs), however we might delay upgrades and avoid some cost in FY11.

FY12 - Assuming successful, remove two labs of twenty machines from on campus - savings $40,000 over four years or $10,000 a year.

FY13 - Potentially eliminate 60 campus desktop machines in existing labs, saving $60,000 over four years or $15,000 a year.

3. Revise UMBC's cell phone policy (Spring 2011)

Cell phone ownership is now very common and consumer pricing is very competitive, especially in terms of the corporate rate charged UMBC. Due to the wide range of devices and personal preference, many universities have eliminated cell phones for employees and switched to a stipend to cover work-related calls. We should revise our cell phone policy to provide either option, and encourage employees to strongly consider the stipend option. This change supports the state legislature's goal of agencies reducing the number of state-paid cell phones. This would provide more flexibility to employees, provide some immediate cost savings to UMBC, and simplify administrative effort in managing cell phones. Estimated cost savings: $40K per year, but likely distributed across departments.

4. Review software site license support (Spring 2011)

DoIT does not have capacity to conduct this review recommended in the IT Restructuring Report. We recommend the IT Steering Committee assign a work group to assess current use, support and funding for campus software site licenses. The IT Steering Committee will establish this work group in the Fall 2010 with recommendations by Spring 2011.
Estimated cost savings: Minor.

5. Migrate Oracle calendar users to Google Calendar or Microsoft Exchange (Spring 2011)

Our current Oracle installation is essentially unsupported and does not work with Outlook connectors. Google calendar does and works well with many smart phones. However, to move forward, all current calendar users need to switch or there is no efficiency in group calendaring. DoIT will develop a proposed strategy to implement this migration to be presented to the Vice Presidents and Deans. This action follows on the IT Work Group report recommendations to establish effective software licensing practices and to develop options for improving productivity and decreasing costs. Estimated cost savings: $16,000/yr.

6. Facilitate volume computer purchase discounts by leveraging "best pricing" terms of the Provost's annual *Computer Replacement Initiative (CRI)* (Spring 2011)

While lack of funds or eligibility based on the CRI criteria may preclude some departments from getting a CRI award, any department can still "buy" off of the same terms that DoIT negotiates with companies such as Dell and Apple. Typically, this can be an additional 10-15 percent off of existing (but low volume) educational purchases. For example, in FY11 a CRI award of $1,000 will cover a laptop that might cost an individual department $1,150. While the total number of annual campus computer purchases needs to be researched (and possibly coordinated), DoIT estimates range from 175-200 computers are purchased outside of the CRI each year. Estimated cost savings: $26,250 to $30,000.

7. Review campus web development (Spring 2011)

The most common IT task for staff in departments is updating websites. A subcommittee representing OIA, DoIT, Library, with representatives from the colleges and divisions, should review our current web development processes, compare them to peers, and recommend changes to the IT Steering Committee. No cost savings anticipated at this time, but efficiency may be improved.

8. Develop Library & DoIT Support Plan for the Student Learning Center (SLC) (Spring 2011)

The SLC envisions ways to reuse space on the first and second floors of the library to support electronic access, collaborative learning, and expanded 24-hour access, which students have requested for several years. UMBC should focus on developing this to support a wide variety of needs and emphasize ways to enhance student-owned technology. No anticipated cost savings, but efficiency may be improved.

9. Create Educause or Internet2 accounts for all campus IT staff (Fall 2011)

There should be more focus on the professional development of all IT staff on campus to support better performance in their job and better alignment of activities. Educause membership would give all IT staff access to comparative benchmarking for central and decentralized IT organizations. Estimated cost savings: No anticipated cost savings, but efficiency and effectiveness of professional development may be improved.

10. Use RT request tracking system for all IT service requests (Fall 2011)

Now used by DoIT, Enrollment Management, Human Resources, Financial Services, Graduate School, and OIR for tracking IT and service requests in PeopleSoft, this would improve communication and service to campus users, and help quantify IT trends and support demands. Estimated cost savings: TBD

11. Use Confluence knowledge base wiki for all campus IT documentation (Fall 2011)

There needs to be easier ways to share information across DoIT and Departmental IT staff. Use of a shared knowledge base such as the DoIT wiki system would provide a standard location for developing local internal documentation. No estimated cost savings, but efficiency may be improved.

12. Provide DoIT trained student web development program (Spring 2012)

Many departments hire students to support their IT needs (especially web pages) with mixed results. In partnership with Career Services, DoIT should examine the feasibility of providing a centrally-trained and supervised pool of student IT support workers. This would be a charge-back service to departments, which might pay higher rates, but require fewer hours for web development support. Estimated cost savings: TBD.

13. Develop hybrid staffing model and pilot 1-2 examples (Spring 2012)

Across DoIT and the campus there are approximately 125 FTE IT staff, with about 40 percent of those staff working in departments. Aligning activities that leverage central support allows departmental IT staff to provide the greatest local value. The goal would be to develop written service level agreements and identify win-win opportunities to better utilize staff or to adjust open positions**.** A pilot with one or two examples will be initiated Fall 2010 with the target of establishing a working model protocol to be in place by Spring 2012. Estimated cost savings: TBD