

ITS-Campus Services

Business Plan

Executive Summary

March, 2005

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A department of Information Technology Services at the University of Iowa

A. Introduction

Campus Services delivers service to The University of Iowa in the following areas:

Front Line Support

The *Help Desk* (HD) serves as a central point for technology questions about hardware and software issues; networks, desktop computers, software applications, etc. In addition to telephone (*4-Help*) and e-mail (its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu) access, the HD provides walk-in service in the lower level of Lindquist Center.

Customers may ask questions or visit the *computer demonstration area* to make a well informed choice when ordering a computer. Both Macs and PCs are on display. The Help Desk also repairs student's PCs attacked by viruses, runs Technical Orientation, runs fall Residence Hall "ResNet" and provides remote PC assistance through an instant messaging-like interface from ITC computer labs ("Help Desk Live").

The *Customer Information Desk* (CID) has a walk up counter for people needing help in accessing services such as an e-mail account, web space, long distance account numbers, etc.

The *Telephone Operators* are the main switchboard for the University campus. They also process multi-point telephone conferences.

Instructional Technology Center (ITC) Support manages two of the busiest computer labs on the UI campus (Main Library and Lindquist Center) and supports the other 24 ITC labs in partnership with other UI organizational units. They provide hardware/software lab support along with training for student ITC monitors. This group also runs an annual "campus PC bid". In summer of 2004, over 2100 computers were ordered on this bid saving UI over \$800,000.

CS/ITC Technical Support provides technical support for CS projects and to the ITC system for campus print accounting, laptop checkout, Help Desk system upgrades, etc. This unit includes support for *assistive technology* such as optical text scanners, Braille printers, voice recognition, screen text to speech, screen text magnifiers, etc. This group also does field support for the ITC computers and printers.

Application Support provides help in using various hardware and software applications at UI. This includes *e-mail* (Eudora, Webmail, Outlook and Outlook Web Access), *mass e-mail* service, *campus meetings calendar* (Exchange), *list serve support*, *statistical software* (SAS, SPSS, etc.), *office applications* (like Word, Excel, Powerpoint, etc.) and *web publishing tools* such as Front Page, Dreamweaver and MS Sharepoint Team Services for collaborative web sites. This group provides *one-on-one consulting*, *answers escalated Help Desk questions*, does *wide ranging trouble shooting* and offers *technology training* (primarily thru a Skillsoft partnership with UI Staff Development) in commonly used software tools (FrontPage, Access, etc.). Application support also includes evaluation and testing of new release readiness for deployment along with extensive printed and web user documentation. Specialized training/consulting is also available for *graduate thesis preparation* tools and techniques.

Software Licensing reduces cost to the University by combining the software license needs of various, separate groups at UI into master agreements for site licenses or bulk license purchases. This office supports central funding for Apple OS, Linux OS and Microsoft OS/Applications (Microsoft Campus Agreement). This office *saves hundreds of thousands of dollars every year* over the cost of non-combined licenses; the estimate for FY05 is over \$300,000 savings.

B. Mission and Service Principles

Our mission, “Making Technology Easy”, is not just about answering the technology questions people might have, but really listening to our campus customers to see where technology is NOT easy. CS can be a pro-active advocate for these customers to get that bit of technology *made* easy (or at least, *easier*). From our constant customer interaction, we are also in a good position to see emerging technology needs on campus and to advocate for the serving of those needs.

Service Principles for Campus Services (CS)

The best service is when service is not needed. The highest value of service will be achieved if we look for opportunities to make technology delivery so simple, reliable and easy that there is no need for service. If Campus Services looks beyond just answering calls for help and advocates for improving our services, that will be the best for our customers.

Shorten the distance between the need and the serving of that need. The more people that are involved with serving a need, the more opportunity exists for delays, mis-communication and the need for time consuming follow up. The better we get at providing simple and effective self-service, or at least streamlining the process of service delivery, the more our customers will be effectively served.

Promote single-point customer ownership. No customer likes to be “bounced around” from one group to another. If there is no clear group to solve a problem or provide a service, Campus Services should be the customer’s single point of contact until that need is served. Our customers should not have to learn how to navigate through the sometimes confusing mix of a diverse community of service providers.

Measure customer satisfaction continuously. Remaining alert to how well we are serving our customers will provide the best opportunity for continuously improving our service. We need to look for opportunities to measure customer satisfaction at every point of our service delivery. To get the best feedback from our customers, the measuring process should be simple, easy and convenient.

Know and understand the needs of our customers. We should proactively ask for information to understand the changing world and needs of our customers. We need to become adept at listening to the difficulties and challenges our customers face and look for opportunities to apply technology or services to those needs. We may employ surveys, focus groups, informal customer discussions or other approaches to staying in touch.

Connecting our customers with someone that can meet their need. Campus Services will not always have the resources or knowledge to meet a particular need. However, we can look for opportunities to connect people and resources together. We should look for opportunities to catalog individuals, communities or other service providers. If a need comes up that we can not serve directly, we can at least provide an opportunity for our customers to be helped.

Serve first; figure out later. If a customer approaches us with a need that is not being met today, we should try to serve. Since we always want our service to be the best, it will be tempting to study, discuss, analyze and examine every aspect of a new service need that comes along. However, serving the need is what is most important. Let’s be sure we serve the need first. Then, let’s be sure to figure out the best service so that we get better at meeting those needs when other customers come along.

C. Continuing operations plans

Each year Campus Services provides support for existing services and responsibilities. We also continue to refine and improve these services. The following is a sampling of the continuing improvements and project initiatives we undertake to improve our service.

1. At least annual review of web site content and printed materials for ease of use and relevance
2. Annual review and revision of student orientation materials for campus technology
3. Annual review and improvement of the “moving into the residence hall” ResNet annual service
4. Improvement/replacement of call tracking system (ARS) for best help desk operation.
5. Improved communications with extensive entries in the ITS newsletter
6. Investing in expanding the technical and service knowledge of our staff
7. ITC computer refresh; most ITC computers are replaced after 3-4 years to “keep up”
8. Review of ITC eligibility rules and computer processes (who gets access, print credit, etc.)
9. Upgrade of ITC operating systems to latest OS (latest features with improved compatibility)
10. Annual ResNet process of getting new students onto the UI network in the dorms
11. Remote support from the Help Desk (Help Desk Live)
12. Partnering with Academic Technology (AT) to provide content for “Online at Iowa” courses
13. Continued support and organization of the Student Technology Advisory Committee (STAC)
(for student input on a variety of ITS initiatives)

D. New service initiatives for 2005

Knowledge Management. The amount of information that our help desk agents need to comprehend and access to solve problems continues to grow every year. One person simply can not keep all of that information readily cataloged in their head. We are in the beginning process of selecting a product and (more importantly) building processes and culture to manage the large of amount of knowledge our agents must access to serve effectively. Eventually, we hope to add a self-service component for after hours support and even to roll out knowledge management to other groups on campus (HR, etc.). Our first step is to work with campus to collect requirements for our knowledge management system.

Help Desk tracking system upgrade. The Help Desk uses ARS (Action Request System) from Remedy to track progress on all trouble tickets. The system is a quite old version that is no longer supported. The original system was heavily customized in house which has prevented us from utilizing upgrades. The programmer that did the customizations left the organization and the system in such a state that fixes and improvements have not been possible to accomplish. The latest version of ARS will be adopted with minimal customizations and emphasis on sustainability for upgrades and new releases. Requirements for implementation are being gathered now, training on ARS customization will take place in summer, 2005 with possible “go live” for Jan. 2006.

Routine measurement of CS customer satisfaction. CS will create survey/follow up processes to produce a routine measure of our customer satisfaction. We will use this as our “speedometer” to know where we can improve our service offerings. The upgrade of our call tracking system will provide important systems improvements to enable this.

Help Desk metrics determination and measurement plan. Our ITS Help Desk is widely appreciated for its service level. We will take it to the next level by determining key metrics and to develop a system plan for routine measurement and publishing. Our tracking system upgrade and ACD upgrade will likely be key to most metrics collection.

Routine collaboration with Regents universities. We already have routine meetings on IT customer service issues with the CIC schools (video conferences on specific topics about every 6 weeks). We will create

routine collaboration opportunities with ISU and UNI as well. UNI will be included in our campus computer bid this year (ISU was invited, but declined to participate).

Student email investigation. We will gather information on student and university needs for email communication; forums, focus groups and surveys will be utilized. This will be the preliminary step to an evaluation of UI infrastructure for email leading to a recommendation by Jan. 2006 for new systems to serve UI's email needs.

Help Desk Live remote service pilot. The ITS Help Desk provides remote assistance through a product known as eCare. This provides cross platform support for a live desktop session between a user and a Help Desk agent. The user can invite take over of their machine for correction or can view a demonstration of a problem on the Help Desk agent's machine. The service will be expanded to a pilot in three ITC computer labs for evaluation to supporting all ITC labs on campus; "live" help desk help for students in any ITC lab on campus during help desk hours of business.

Email and calendar "from anywhere" mobility support. A variety of UI administrative customers have requested support for highly portable devices to read their email and check their calendar from anywhere...including off campus while traveling. Devices such as the Treo 650 (Palm OS) and Audiovox 6600 cell phone enabled Pocket PC will be tested and documented (several are already deployed as of this time). Our Exchange implementation of Active Sync will be leveraged for sustainable support. Joint support of Blackberry devices will be investigated with our Hospital IT organization.

Virtual ITC. The mission of our ITC computer labs deployment is to make technology accessible to students both on and off campus. Traditionally, specially licensed software like statistics packages could only be accessed by coming on campus and using an ITC lab. We will now publish 5-10 of our ITC titles for Citrix access for "access from anywhere", on or off campus. Not all titles are presently licensed for "off-campus" access. We will be checking the success of the Citrix deployment for the addition of other titles.

Thin client pilot. ITC labs have always deployed actual personal computers for student use. However, our software data mine shows that web browsing is by far the highest usage application in our ITC labs. We will pilot the use of "thin clients" for our Express Email Stations on campus to gain experience and evaluate the benefit of possible replacement of some the personal computer lab "fleet" with thin clients.

Print accounting service for campus. The ITC computer lab system has developed a redesigned print accounting model after switching our lab technology from Novell NDS to MS Active Directory. Since about half the labs on campus are independent, private departmental labs, CS has begun to offer print accounting services to these other departments as a less expensive alternative to developing the service themselves. This has the side benefit of a more consistent printing process model for students as they use labs across campus.

Key server software title pooling for campus. The ITC computer lab system uses the KeyServer product to pool concurrent licenses across machines in ITC labs across campus; saving licensing costs and providing useful information for our software usage data mine. Other independent, private departmental labs can benefit from this service as well (not to mention the possibilities for staff and faculty license savings). We will work with other IT partners to make this service available to campus.