

NEASC STANDARD SEVEN LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The University operates two distinct departments for information resources and their services: the University Libraries, whose Dean reports to the Provost, and the Office of Information Technology, whose Chief Information Officer reports to the President. There is a close relationship between the two entities, which will become closer with the implementation of the Library's Learning Commons, discussed throughout this report.

The dramatic increase in the size of the student body and quality of scholarship expected from faculty and students at RWU, along with continued rapid growth of information technology, has presented a significant challenge for RWU's library and information resources in recent years. To meet this challenge, the institution has taken several important steps. Most importantly, substantial improvements in the University Library and Information Technology over the past ten years have contributed to a shared vision and greater collaboration and coordination between the two agencies in support of faculty teaching and student learning. The need for appropriate and sufficient information resources, services and technologies is reflected in the key goals of the strategic plans of both the Library and Information Technology.

The University Library's 2004 Strategic Plan emphasizes the library's goal to "establish a Learning Commons by functionally integrating library services, information technology services and media services to provide a continuum of service to the user, a blending of staff knowledge and skills, and referral to appropriate areas of professional expertise." The Learning Commons represents a unified effort between the Library and Information Technology not only to improve research and instructional services but to create a state-of-the-art facility for integrating new information resources and technologies into the student's learning experience. The Learning Commons, both as a concept and a place, serves as an umbrella under which the Library and Information Technology's goals and objectives for the next several years will be pursued. It is discussed in greater detail in the "Projection" section below.

Additional changes in the Library include its taking a leadership role in the HELIN Consortium of Rhode Island academic libraries; significant improvements in funding and the management of collections; and a revitalized user instruction program. Media Services, operationally part of the Library, was consolidated 2 years ago (combining University and Law School service agencies) with increases in staffing and services. Information Technology has made great gains in network reliability and support of the end user by committing to Internet 2 and cooperative statewide networks. The immediate future for the Library and IT promises seamless services to the user through implementation of the Library's new Learning Commons model.

I. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

DESCRIPTION

The Roger Williams University Library is comprised of three components: the Main Library and the Architecture Library in Bristol, and the Metro Information Center in Providence. The Main Library serves a diverse constituency of users including

undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and members of the Bristol community. Media Services is housed in and administered by the Library and is responsible for the support of instructional technology both in the classroom and for special events. The Architecture Library is a branch library located in the Architecture Building and primarily serves the students and faculty of the School of Art, Architecture and Historic Preservation. It is one of the strongest collections devoted to architecture in Southern New England. The Providence Metro Information Center currently supports the continuing education curriculum and degree program courses taught in Providence.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Providing excellent information resources, services and user instruction in support of teaching, learning and research is the primary goal of the University Library. The changing nature of student research and the emergence of new forms of digital scholarship are formidable challenges to traditional methods of providing library service. Therefore, the Library has begun the reinvention of its service programs—Reference Services and the Library Instruction program. Reference Services is currently being redesigned both conceptually and physically as part of the Learning Commons model. The limited number of professional librarians, the increasing demand for one-on-one research consultations, and the growing need of users for technological assistance, makes this service the Library's highest priority. The plethora of databases and increased amount of scholarship being published digitally means that greater assistance is required in locating, evaluating and applying information. Additionally, a new staff position was funded this year to support the librarians in the Reference area and to help the Reference librarians with providing research and instructional assistance to users.

Library services are provided to all RWU students studying abroad. Students are guaranteed Internet service with access to the RWU Library's electronic resources. These resources include full-text periodical articles, electronic books, specialized subject databases and online reference sources including dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, etc. Students are given an instructional sheet on the use of the Library database from remote locations. In addition, some RWU Study Abroad programs give students access to local libraries, while other programs give access to the libraries at the institution with which RWU has affiliated.

In 2003 the Library hired its first Instructional Services Librarian to spearhead the overhaul of the library instruction program in light of new national standards on information literacy competency in higher education published by the Association of College and Research Libraries in 2000.¹ The Instructional Services Librarian conducted a survey of the faculty and the results indicated that more than half of the group sampled believed their students lacked fundamental academic research skills. She then prepared a plan (see Appendix) to map out the ways in which the RWU Library might encourage the development of the information-literate student.

The Library has enjoyed an active instruction program for many years; however, the new plan outlines a sequential program of instruction which would target student's needs. The sequence includes a First Year Experience for entering students, which the University initiated as a pilot project for a group of freshman in 2004, and has now

¹ "Information Literacy Competency Standards," (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000).

instituted as a permanent program for freshmen. The next step in the sequence, a required course for majors in each school or department with a dedicated library component, is also being investigated by the Instructional Services Librarian and the instruction team. The final step, advanced research instruction and consultation, has been successfully implemented in a number of upper level courses. Regardless of their level, assignment-based instruction is the focus of each instruction session and continues successfully with over 100 library instruction sessions taught each semester.

LIBRARY FUNDING

Library budget allotments for information resources have been progressively better supported over the past few years, following several years of insufficient and inconsistent funding. However, the rising costs of serials and increase in the variety and cost of electronic resources have necessitated new methods of creative and flexible budgeting. Funding for library support of new courses and academic programs has fostered the need for careful collection management planning and use of financial resources. Library resources are selected in alignment with a recently revised collection management program available on the Library's Web site (See appendix). The University has made a concerted effort during the past several years to support faculty and undergraduate research and has increased Library funding accordingly. In addition, the Library's consortium partnerships allow access to several large research collections nearby (e.g. Brown University).

ACCESS TO OTHER LIBRARIES

In addition to RWU's Law School Library, students have many options for accessing library resources at other institutions. Access has expanded exponentially through the Library's participation in the Higher Education Library Information Network (HELIN), a consortium made up of ten academic libraries and fifteen health sciences libraries in the surrounding region. HELIN provides its member libraries with over 5 million print and electronic items and with robust purchasing power when negotiating licenses for electronic resources. Book requests from partner libraries usually are filled within two days. Staff members from all consortium libraries serve on a variety of committees to ensure excellence in services and collections consortium-wide.

Other consortia which provide additional opportunities for interlibrary borrowing for RWU students and faculty are the Consortium of Rhode Island Academic and Research Libraries (CRIARL) including all of the academic and research libraries in Rhode Island as well as the historical collections of Providence Public Library and the Rhode Island Historical Society, CLAN, the consortium of Rhode Island public libraries, and regional and national resource exchanges such as NELINET and OCLC. The Innovative Users Group, a national forum for the Library's ILS provider (Innovative Interfaces Inc.), enables national and regional opportunities for cooperation among many libraries. Our participation in a national consortium of peer institutions, the Affinity Group, allows us to compare information on funding, services and strategic planning. These cooperative efforts enhance collections and services beyond the Library's walls and serve to both broaden and bring closer the world of scholarly research.

STAFFING

Professional staff members in the Library are responsible for the services described here. All librarians are required to serve on the Reference desk, giving them a common understanding of the student body and their needs. The librarians possess a minimum of a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from an ALA-accredited institution and several hold or are pursuing a second Master's degree in a subject area. Full-time librarians have faculty status and must contribute rigorously to the profession in order to qualify for promotion and tenure. Of the eight librarians, four hold tenure, two at the rank of Full Professor.

The Associate Dean of University Library Services, a new position in the Library administration, was added in 2004, enabling better communication among the Library staff and improved oversight of Library initiatives. The Library Administration together shares over 50 years of library experience in a variety of academic library positions. The Library's Administrative Assistant position was upgraded from a Secretary two years ago to meet the demands of the Library's growing program.

PHYSICAL SPACE

The Main and Architecture Library facilities were built in 1991 and 1987, respectively, and are currently outgrowing their existing space. Growth of collections, a larger student body and the need to accommodate new technologies and support services have constrained the Library's ability to fulfill its mission. The School of Education currently occupies 30% of the Main Library's assignable space. At this time, the Library is working with architectural space consultants, Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott, to propose a plan for the reconfiguration of the Main Library's space. The Architecture Library is in the process of repositioning its public service area and has a fully articulated building program as part of Phase III of the Architecture Building's expansion.

APPRAISAL

The Library is engaged in ongoing efforts to assess student learning and to meet needs identified by assessments. At present, a comprehensive information literacy program is well underway supporting student learning outcomes. Approximately 200 classes are taught in an academic year, and are based on class assignments following the problem-based learning model. (Examples of student assessment from the instruction program are available in NEASC Team Workroom, Standard Seven, Doc. 24.) The Library's participation in the planning and teaching of the First Year Experience (FYE) and the production of an online tutorial for freshman have provided assessment data essential for improving both the FYE and library instruction programs. The highly successful information literacy program, however, has reached its facilities and staffing limits. Presently, librarians are forced to teach their classes using the public computers in the Reference Area in lieu of a fully-equipped electronic classroom facility. The need for sufficient, appropriately trained staff is currently being studied to carry out this essential service program (See Staffing Plan in Appendix.)

Physical space is another area in which the Library has upgraded its resources but continues to face challenges. The Library serves as the intellectual and cultural heart of the University. A major space on the first floor of the Main Library was retrofitted in 2005, made possible by a large gift to the institution and named for the donor—the Mary Tefft White Cultural Center. This area serves as a popular space for cultural and

academic programs, group study, and reading towards enriching the academic curriculum. In addition, in 2004 the Library became a completely wireless environment with public spaces that are tech-ready for a variety of instructional uses. The Mary Tefft White Center, for example, has the capability for streaming audio and video, and Web-casting. A great amount of space in the Library, however, including all group study rooms, is currently being used by the School of Education. The LibQual+ survey conducted in Spring, 2004, indicated that lack of appropriate space for quiet study and group projects was a problem for many students.

Access to library materials across Rhode Island and neighboring Massachusetts is facilitated by the Library's membership in the HELIN Consortium. Usage statistics show the value of our participation in HELIN with large numbers of books borrowed from other HELIN institutions that are usually delivered to RWU within two days. Plans for a consortium-wide digital repository are underway with the recent award of a Davis Foundation grant to fund the software for the HELIN digital repository. This will allow for open access to faculty and student scholarship. The institution will be called upon to support the creation of an institutional repository, contributing to HELIN's digital repository, known as the Digital Commons.

Financial support for the Library has been consistently strong over the past five years but must be redistributed to meet the changes in curriculum and the large growth in faculty and student populations. Graduate programs, new global initiatives, and international partnerships present opportunities for the Library to further integrate research and technology into teaching and learning. The Library's dynamic Collection Management Plan will maximize potential to meet these opportunities. The volatile pricing of both serials and electronic resources present a considerable challenge for the Library's efforts to purchase materials to support new and existing programs. The 2004 LibQual+ survey reflected faculty concerns with the adequacy of Library collections.

The RWU Library is staffed with librarians and other professionals, administrators, and support staff. Recognizing the increased demand for all library services and the growing need to educate users in new technologies toward the goal of attracting and retaining students, a plan for defining new staffing will be developed in the coming months. New initiatives including the Learning Commons and the HELIN digital repository will require a systematic professional staffing appraisal in order to achieve stated Library goals. Existing service positions may be restructured in order to integrate the Library, Information Technology, and Media Services. The University Archives, administered and located in the Library, has become a priority this year due to the University's 50th anniversary in 2006 and the need for supporting historical documentation. While Media Services reliably supports many academic and administrative clients, it currently relies heavily on students to deliver services. Because of Architecture and Art faculty demand for digital imaging services and collections, the Architecture Library has the need for additional staff to manage the transition from slides to digital images.

In recognition of these staffing needs, three positions have been approved for the Library for next year: a part-time Project Archivist to establish a records management program for the University Archives, a Media Services technician to assist with training and troubleshooting new technology, and the conversion of an existing Assistant Visual Resources Curator position to a full Visual Resources Curator position for the

Architecture Library in order to manage the visual resources analog and digital collections.

Institutional Effectiveness

The Library measures its effectiveness using a variety of standard data measurements and collection usage studies. Most recently (Spring 2004) the LibQual+ survey instrument was used to determine faculty and student satisfaction with the Library's collections, services, and space. Data from that survey will be used to redirect funds where needed and establish new initiatives. Library monograph and serial use statistics are kept and reviewed annually to determine collection development expenditure plans.

The librarians are increasingly making use of the Innovative Interfaces report writing module for analysis of usage data for collection development and long-range planning. Database and Web site usage statistics are gathered monthly and used to determine licensing and subscription continuations. Benchmark comparisons with peer institutions have been made with regards to staffing, budget, technology, and facilities in order to assist with strategic planning and effective daily operations. (See Appendix)

PROJECTION

Recent strategic planning efforts by the Library and Information Technology have led to a collaborative partnership between the two agencies towards a new model of service—the Learning Commons—characterized by integrated library, technology, and media services. The Learning Commons will require public service areas on the first floor of the Main Library to be integrated, in order to provide a collaborative learning environment for students and faculty. New features for the Library will include a media production lab for instructing faculty and students in advanced multimedia design and digital technologies, and an electronic teaching classroom for library instruction. Workspace will be needed for staff from Information Technology to be moved into the Library.

The Library's mission is to serve as the University's intellectual and cultural center, providing individual and group-use space that invites intellectual inquiry, scholarly exchange, and allows for quiet study and reflection. A goal of the Libraries, as outlined in our 2004 Strategic Plan, is enhancing the Library environment to create a love of learning in students and to meet their learning outcomes. The Learning Commons will provide a symbiosis with the Mary Tefft White Cultural Center as both service areas will work together to create a sense of community and foster excellence in teaching, learning and scholarship. Whereas the Cultural Center aims to offer programs that enhance student learning outcomes beyond the curriculum, the Learning Commons will serve to integrate information, technology and learning to support student learning outcomes within the curriculum.

The mission of the Learning Commons addresses faculty needs, as well. Faculty instruction increasingly depends on an understanding and ability to apply advanced multimedia technologies in the classroom. Training and space for faculty in the use of these technologies currently is limited. The Learning Commons will offer faculty a multimedia lab and classroom where they can privately learn the technology with the help of Library and I.T. staff and practice its application in the classroom.

The architectural consultants, Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, hired in fall, 2005, will address the space issues in the Main Library, including the Learning Commons, collection growth, the University Archives, and better workspace for staff. Additional space modifications are now being made in the Architecture Library in accordance with the Learning Commons model. The planned expansion of the Architecture Library, Phase 3 of the Architecture Building expansion, will ameliorate the space problems in that Library.

In addition to the Learning Commons, the Library's and Media Services' strategic plans, updated in the Spring of 2005, outline a number of priorities for the near future. Those items that are currently budgeted and beginning implementation include the Learning Commons initiative; an architectural planning study for reconfiguration of space in the Main Library; an interim space reorganization for the Architecture Library, pending Phase 3 of the building expansion; as part of the campus technology plan, adding approximately ten multimedia classrooms on campus per year; and participating in the HELIN Digital Commons (for which a Davis Foundation grant was awarded to HELIN for purchase of the software in fall, 2005).

Those priorities not yet budgeted and/or fully articulated include: designing and implementing services to assist faculty with integrating technology into the curriculum and the classroom; using the LibQual+ survey results in focus groups to inform collection management (annual budget), library services (senior research, FYE, library instruction) and facilities (maintain group study and public program space); establishing a formal records management program for the University Archives; developing a comprehensive staffing plan to meet the University's instructional mission; and creating a strategic staff development program for Library and Media Services staff.

II. INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Information Technology Department at RWU has primary responsibility for ensuring that the institution's overall mission and objectives for the use of information technology are achieved. It is the role of the IT organization to provide leadership, technical expertise, and technical support services within the institution. Information Technology at Roger Williams enables student learning, faculty productivity, and administrative support and efficiency by creating and supporting a modern, reliable, high quality, secure technical environment for learning, creative endeavors, and research. In addition, IT fosters collaboration among RWU's global and diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. This is accomplished in a transparent, seamless environment that promotes and supports continuous innovation and improvements.

DESCRIPTION

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In March of 2004, the report of the IT Governance Committee was adopted and implemented. The new governance structure is designed to "improve decision-making and streamline operations." It replaces a fragmented, unrepresentative structure that did not meet the needs of a modern university. The basic components of the structure are:

- A Vice Presidents' IT Council

- An IT Policy and Strategy Committee (ITPS)
- An Academic Information Technology Committee (AIT)
- An Administrative Technology Group that is composed of:
 - Administrative Systems Group (ASG), and
 - Administrative Electronic Communications and Marketing (AECM) Group

The structure is inclusive and interconnected, with clearly-defined functions assigned to each group or committee, and membership from all University constituencies. (See the full report and minutes of meetings in NEASC Team Workroom, Standard Seven, IT, Doc. 17 and Doc. 18.)

In early 2005, the position of Director of IT was upgraded to Chief Information Officer, a position that sits at the Vice Presidential level in the University's organizational chart and reports to the President of the University (See Appendix B for organizational chart). The IT department currently has 27 staff members reporting to the CIO and his upper level staff. According to Gartner IT Staffing Surveys, data from Educause, and current staffing levels at peer institutions in the New England area, this level is below industry standards. (See <http://www.educause.edu/apps/coredata/reports/2004/>.)

FUNCTION

Information Technology at the University encompasses a wide range of computing and communications technology and its functions, including computers, networks, telephones, video, distribution and transmission equipment, multimedia audio-visual equipment, digital printing equipment and other related resources. Responsibility for most of these functions resides with the IT Department; however, there is some shared jurisdiction (e.g. the Library has responsibility for audiovisual equipment and multi-media services). There are also some operations that are outside of IT's jurisdiction (e.g. the Language Lab is operated by the College of Arts and Sciences and the Web site is administered by the Office of Enrollment Management). Increasingly, however, IT is assuming responsibility for many of the operations listed above.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Roger Williams University is a member of the Ocean State Higher Education, Economic Development, and Administrative Network (OSHEAN - <http://www.oshean.org>). OSHEAN is a consortium made up of universities, colleges, and non-profit organizations, and it was formed to foster the development of a communications infrastructure for Rhode Island's research, educational, and public service community by creating a stable, economical high-speed network for its members.

The University's OSHEAN membership supports the campus network's connections to Internet 1 and Internet 2, the latter being reserved for research and education purposes. (See Appendix C for technical details and a campus network diagram.) The University is committed to the implementation of a replacement/upgrade plan for its network infrastructure in order to replace aging equipment and infrastructure and maintain up-to-date technology. RWU is considering the possibility of voice video and data convergence as it moves forward in the 21st century.

RWU has deployed a limited number of wireless environments in several key areas of the University in order to support research, teaching, and study. Some of these

areas include the Main and Architecture Libraries, academic buildings such as the Law School and the Gabelli School of Business, and many lounge and study areas across campus. (See a complete list in Appendix D.) The Office of Information Technology regulates and manages these environments according to the Wireless Airspace Policy adopted in September of 2004. (Appendix E)

RWU supports its students with a variety of computer labs across the RWU campuses. Each of the labs is tailored to the academic area it serves. The Gabelli School of Business, for example, provides several computer labs, both Mac and PC, within the building, with software specific to the Business School curriculum. The School of Architecture provides hardware and software specific to the design curriculum, including CAD software and plotters for large-scale printing. The Library houses a general computer lab open to all students, faculty, and the general public, with a variety of specialized databases supporting the curriculum. All computer labs are open to the entire campus community. A list of these labs may be found in Appendix F.

The University has an increasing number of “smart classrooms” throughout the campus which enable faculty to incorporate multi-media technology into their teaching. Some rooms include a podium computer, an LCD projector, a large screen, and speakers. For classrooms without fixed equipment, video/DVD players, TV monitors, portable sound systems, and laptops with specific software can be delivered to the classroom by advance request. These services are supported by the Media Services Department of the Library. Funds for the smart classrooms are allocated according to an annual plan produced by the Academic Information Technology Committee.

The Office of Information Technology and the Office of Finance have a clearly articulated policy for providing, upgrading and replacing faculty and staff computers. Faculty members receive a laptop, a docking station, a flat-panel monitor and keyboard, a mouse and a 128Mb memory stick. Staff are provided with a desktop, monitor, keyboard and mouse. This equipment is replaced on a 3-5 year revolving schedule. (See CAPEX Personal Computer Upgrade Policies and Procedures in Online Evidence Center, Standard Seven, IT, Doc. 7.) Printers and scanners are typically networked to a central location by department.

The University currently sets minimum standards for the requirement of student laptops, varying by academic program. Each school and college recommends systems students should acquire to successfully complete their academic program. Although there is currently no campus-wide student laptop requirement, 97% of students come to campus with a computer. To ensure that those bringing computers to campus do not spread computer viruses, the University has set up a rigorous program to control viruses and provides software and instruction on student computing prior to students’ arrival on campus. Since 2005, the University has contracted with Computopia to sell and support student laptops loaded with University-approved programs at a store located on campus.

SOFTWARE AND SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Software - Applications are a critical but often overlooked part of the resources required to support academics. Currently there is no provision for supplying student software with the exception of MS Visual Studio for CIS majors. There are ample public computer labs with required academic software available for students. According to 2 informal surveys, should a student wish to purchase any software for their personal use, it

can be obtained through the Campus Computer Store with appropriate academic discounts. As the University considers a strategic decision to require laptops, the provision of academic software must also be considered. However, through software requests from faculty and recommendations from the Academic Information Technology Committee, the University has acquired an impressive collection of software over the past five years to support instruction. This list is included in Appendix G.

Course Management - Roger Williams University currently utilizes Blackboard Enterprise edition V.7.x as its Learning/Course Management system. Blackboard was recently updated from version 6 to version 7 and is now being integrated with Datatel, the University's enterprise resource planning system (ERP) and the University portal "myRWU" (<http://my.rwu.edu>), providing a single sign-on solution for students.

Portals - In January 2006, the University launched the "myRWU" portal through which students can access their e-mail, course registration, grades, class schedules, the campus calendar, Blackboard and other student information. Campus news and other announcements are found on the front page of this portal which is maintained by the Office of Public Affairs. The result of these changes is a comprehensive, single sign-on Web portal for access to e-mail, communications, student services and Blackboard. For policies on the use of e-mail and campus-wide communications, (in NEASC Team Workroom, Standard Seven, IT, Doc. 19).

Web Space for Faculty and Students - Web space is provided to faculty members for the purpose of hosting personal academic pages. Web space can be provided for student use for academic purposes only. Public Web space is provided through the University Portal "myRWU."

E-mail and campus-wide communications - The official means of campus communication is through the University e-mail system (addresses containing @rwu.edu or @hawks.rwu.edu). All faculty, staff, and students are issued these addresses. E-mail can be accessed through the use of a client application such as Outlook™ or Outlook Express™ or through the Web. Scalix™, the University's e-mail and office collaboration environment, is used by faculty and staff and was fully deployed in early 2005.

E-mail Listservs - Listservs can be created upon request for the purposes of collaboration and academic or administrative need. Once created, the requesting individual is responsible for the administration of the list as required.

I2 Video Conferencing - The University has the capability of providing Video-Conferencing and live streaming services utilizing h.323 (Video over IP) protocols. Several faculty members have integrated this technology into their teaching over the past several years.

Tegrity WebLerner and Apreso Classroom Capture Systems - The University provides a Tegrity WebLerner Studio Cart for use by the faculty. This portable device enables the creation of on-line course content by digitally recording a teaching session utilizing a whiteboard, PowerPoint™, and audio and video recording of the instructor for delivery on the Web. In early 2006, The University implemented Apreso Classroom Capture systems in 3 locations across campus. This system allows for the automatic capture and publishing of classroom content with minimal faculty intervention.

The Academic Technology Center, located in the Gabelli School of Business, has a computer, printer and scanner dedicated to programs that serve the needs of students with learning disabilities. The Academic Technology Center Manager works with the Center for Academic Development to select appropriate software, inform students of its availability, and train and support students when necessary. For a list of specific software programs see Appendix H.

IT provides professional development opportunities in technology for faculty and staff. The Academic Technology Center Manager and the Instructional Technologist offer training sessions for faculty and staff when new technologies are introduced. On-demand training is also available when requested.

Students enrolled in off-campus study programs that are affiliated with RWU have access to the Internet in a number of ways depending on the program (e.g. computer labs, student laptops, Internet cafes, etc). All University students maintain their University e-mail accounts while studying off-campus, as well as access to the Library's catalog and databases. The University is in Phase II of a pilot VPN (virtual private network) project to provide off-site round-the-clock, network-based access to University resources for faculty and key staff.

In January of 2006, the University contracted with its PC vendor, Computopia, to provide Help Desk/Call Center services. The Help Desk, located off site, operates a call desk from 8 am to midnight. Prior to January, IT staffed a help desk for students, faculty and staff with operating hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students could also receive technical assistance through the STAR program that employed student workers to troubleshoot computer problems. Outsourcing the Help Desk was necessary in order to increase the responsiveness, availability and operational effectiveness of user services/help desk services for all University constituencies while reducing costs. (See the full implementation plan in NEASC Team Workroom, Standard Seven, IT, Doc. 20.)

Through its inclusive and integrated governance and strategic planning process, the IT department has developed a series of policies that govern the use of technology and other information resources on campus. The policies are: Appropriate Use Policy, Copyright Infringement Policy, CAPEX Personal Computer Upgrade/Replacement Policy, Wireless Airspace Policy and Email Policy. (They can be found in Online NEASC Evidence Center, Standard 7, IT, Doc. 6, Doc. 7 and Doc. 19.)

APPRAISAL

Information resources are rapidly changing at the University. New technologies are being introduced every day, along with new systems to support these technologies. The IT staff is well-trained and responsive, but the pace of change is sometimes so rapid that end users are either unaware of the changes or unable to take advantage of them. To facilitate implementation and integration of these improvements, IT frequently e-mails the University community with updates and offers of training sessions.

The new governance structure has dramatically improved the number of voices at the table, campus-wide. Through a variety of linkages between staff, faculty and students, information about new systems and new policies is disseminated. For example, some faculty members are responsible for making the decisions with regard to where new smart classrooms are deployed and to what extent technology is integrated into each room. They are members of the Academic Information Technology Committee who work

with their deans to gather input from other faculty members on all academic technology decisions. (Minutes from the meetings are available in the Evidence Center, Doc. 22.)

This rapidly improving sector of the University will be well-served by the adoption of the “Learning Commons” model that will combine user services of the Academic Technology Center, Instructional Technology, the Help Desk, Technical Services, Library Information Services, Multi-media Services and the Audio-visual Department into one comprehensive information and user services center. Planning is well underway for the reconfiguration of space in the University Library to accommodate this significant alteration in the University’s approach to information and technology. Implementation of this plan will eliminate some of the problems that result from insufficient space, IT staff offices dispersed through campus, and inadequate heating and cooling in the hardware areas.

Information Technology budget resources have been progressively better supported over the past few years considering the explosion in technology use. However, the rising costs of applications and application support, the increased need for security, the increase in the number of new deployments of both software and hardware, the development of new technology, and the need to replace aging equipment and services that have been deferred for a number of years now require a higher commitment of funding resources dedicated to Information Technology. The University is responding positively to requests for additional resources guided by IT and the University’s strategic plans.

Faculty and staff have positively assessed Information Technology on campus, as expressed through the IT governance structure. The governance structure assures direct input from all constituencies to the IT department for implementation, correction, or other action as necessary. The structure has fostered improvements in communication, campus-wide. Outsourcing the Help Desk has saved valuable staff time for higher-level tasks. The 3-5 year computer replacement policy is universally and consistently applied for all faculty and staff. The computer classrooms at the University are available to faculty for 350 teaching hours per week and by students for 250 hours per week.

Blackboard utilization has increased dramatically over the past five years. In the Fall of 2001, 40 faculty and 652 students used Blackboard. By the fall of 2005, 207 faculty and 4508 students (which is close to universal usage by each group) were Blackboard users, representing five-fold and seven-fold increases, respectively. (See Appendix H) An effort has also been made to increase the training in Blackboard.

The extent to which IT infrastructure and services are effectively serving the needs of the University community can be measured by the changes in service, including increased uptime in core and edge network equipment, and by progress made in achieving the goals laid out in the strategic and operational plans for IT. There is anecdotal evidence that faculty, as a group (with some notable exceptions), have been slow to integrate technology into their teaching. While teaching tools such as Blackboard are being slowly and steadily adopted by more and more faculty, there is a need for more training opportunities and incentives to make faculty aware of and able to adapt to new technologies.

PROJECTION

Dramatic improvements have occurred in the past decade in the area of information technology. The department with primary responsibility for this function has become professionalized, with the Chief Information Officer playing an important role on the University administration's team. This leadership, along with the new governance structure, has produced a strategic plan aligned with the University's mission and core values.

The University has provided budget resources each year to support the upgrade and maintenance of the campus infrastructure. This includes the upgrade and replacement of portions of the Campus Network, the replacement of aging servers, the upgrade of central storage and backup systems, the replacement of the aging telephone system infrastructure, etc. For the coming academic year close to \$1,500,000 has been appropriated for both continual improvement of IT systems and strategic projects.

UPGRADED CLASSROOMS

In May of 2006, the Academic Information Technology Committee (AIT) voted to recommend that eight additional classrooms be outfitted with enhanced technology according to a 5-level tier structure ranging from Tier 0 through Tier 4. The tier structure is outlined in Appendix I. The University has committed to supporting these technology improvements for a group of classrooms, with a budget allocation for 2006-2007 of \$125,000. A list of the classrooms to be upgraded can be found in Appendix I.

ENHANCED NETWORK FUNCTIONS

According to Information Technology's strategic plan, one of its primary goals is the creation of a networked environment for the support of direct action and self-service applications for University admissions and housing, and for the creation of a network-based log-on environment. The Offices of Admissions and Residence Life are working with IT on the first two of these initiatives. Regarding the third, "myRWU" was deployed in early 2006 to create the single log-on. Additional developments including integration and deployment of Active Directory (AD) are ongoing. These types of applications and solutions are driven and managed by the offices with primary responsibility (Admissions or Residence Life). Admissions applications will likely be addressed in the 2008-2009 academic year. Currently Residence Life and IT are working on Web applications for production in Spring 2007. Improvements in network reliability and security have supported functions such as event registration (managed via Harris), bookstore purchasing (hosted by Barnes and Noble), financial aid support, and licensed library services. Students can now pay their bills online through TMS.

Another strategic goal is to build an infrastructure to support widespread use of network-based technologies throughout all University learning sites. As part of this initiative residence hall networks will be upgraded, the wireless network will continue to be expanded, electronic library services including reserve and reference will be expanded; multi-point videoconferencing systems will be brought on-line and the pilot VPN project will look towards expansion. Residence hall upgrades are planned as detailed in the Network Upgrade Plan (In NEASC Team Workroom document, Standard Seven, IT, Doc. 23).

STAFFING

It is expected that two additional staff members will be added to the IT Department in the near future. One additional staff member has been added (2005-2006) to lead business intelligence efforts. Another network administrator will be requested for 2007-2008. When the Information Commons building is completed, the entire technical staff will be relocated to improve efficiency, responsiveness, productivity and morale.

Institutional Effectiveness

At present there is no formal mechanism for comprehensively assessing staff, student and faculty satisfaction with the University's information technology and information resources. However, continual input is gathered from IT constituency group representatives as part of a thoroughly designed IT governance structure. In addition, Residence Life surveys do include an assessment of student satisfaction, and have shown continual improvement in this area over the past few years. Additional assessment including University-wide surveys and data from training sessions and workshops will be conducted in the future.

CONCLUSION

The Library and Information Technology at Roger Williams University share a common goal of providing students and faculty with the highest level of information resources services. Recent collaborations between the two departments have included implementing a wireless environment in the main areas of the University Library, working closely together on selection and access to software for students, such as the "Turn-it-In" plagiarism software, for example, and hosting the computer store staff in the Library to set up student computers. Currently, space and program planning for the Learning Commons is providing the staff of both departments with their greatest opportunity for collaboration yet.

The future holds great promise for new opportunities to work together more directly. By integrating Information Technology within the Library, cooperation will be necessary in several areas. With the common goal of seamless service to the end user, cross-training of staff from both departments will create more knowledgeable, technologically advanced staff at the service desk. Training faculty and students in the use of new technologies will become a priority, requiring trainers from the Library, Information Technology and Media Services. New committees and task forces will be formed to work on issues directly related to teaching and learning in a technologically advanced environment. Socially, partnerships will be made by sharing work space, staff lounge areas, and social events.

The exciting opportunities that await the Library and Information Technology at RWU will create an energy and excitement that the students will experience directly. The strength of the staff working in each area will be multiplied for the simple reason that they share a common mission towards improvement of information resource services. The work of both the Library and Information Technology to this point has been collaborative but the next ten years will prove their ability to transform the students and faculty into sophisticated library and technology users.