

Draft Resolution on Information Technology Planning
For December 6, 1999 BOR Technology Committee meeting

Whereas Senate Bill 682 Article 12-112 (B) mandates that:

The Board of Regents shall develop an Information Technology Plan for the University System of Maryland that includes Information Technology policies and standards, including policies and standards for information management and telecommunication systems, that are functionally compatible with the State Information Technology plan established under Title 3, Subtitle 4 of the State Finance and Procurement Article

Whereas Information Technology services are critical to achieving the teaching, learning, research, and community outreach missions of the institutions of the University System of Maryland;

Whereas Information Technology services are also critical to the efficient and effective operation of all components of the University System of Maryland; and

Whereas Information Technology is a field that is rapidly changing;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT

The Board of Regents direct that

- 1 the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland be instructed to develop an Information Technology plan for the University System that is consistent with Article 12-112 (B);
2. this plan be regularly updated by mechanisms to be determined by the Chancellor;
3. the Board of Regents review and adopt, at least on an annual basis, the then current University System of Maryland Information Technology Plan;
4. the first such plan should be developed for review and adoption by the Board of Regents at their July 2000 meeting.

Information Technology Coordinating Council

Mission

The University System of Maryland (USM) Information Technology Coordinating Council shall coordinate information technology activities of the USM that transcend an individual campus. It is a forum for collaboration, communication, and joint action on information technology issues within the USM. Additionally, it is charged with creating and maintaining the USM Information Technology plan.

Objectives

- ◆ To create and maintain the USM information technology strategic plan on behalf of the Board of Regents
- ◆ To seek opportunities for information technology collaboration among USM institutions that benefit the participating institutions
- ◆ To identify and develop solutions for common information technology needs within the USM that are beyond the scope of any individual campus
- ◆ To seek opportunities where the size and diversity of the USM can be used to common advantage
- ◆ To find leveraged solutions for information technology problems faced by USM institutions in common
- ◆ To develop information technology strategies that make the USM more coherent to external stakeholders such as off –campus students and prospective students, prospective employees, suppliers of goods and services, State government, and the citizens of Maryland
- ◆ To identify and develop plans for activities that are more efficiently and/or effectively done by multiple campuses or System-wide
- ◆ To monitor emerging technologies in higher education and promote the application of these technologies at peer institutions in the USM
- ◆ To seek opportunities for common information architectures concerning standards, platforms, networks, applications, and data where such an approach will benefit the participating institutions and the USM
- ◆ To identify and track best practices for aligning information technology with missions at peer institutions, including the use of information technology metrics
- ◆ To develop sustainable funding models for information technology that may be broadly adopted

Mode of achieving objectives

- ◆ The Information Technology Coordinating Council (ITCC) as a vehicle for collaboration, communication, coordination, and joint action among USM institutions is not a hierarchical agency of the USM

- ◆ The ITCC shall identify issues, set priorities for addressing these issues, and recommend actions to appropriate entities within the USM
- ◆ The ITCC will have a Steering Committee that sets agendas
- ◆ Typically the ITCC will create a working group of specialists in an area to make recommendations for action in that area

Some examples of collaboration areas

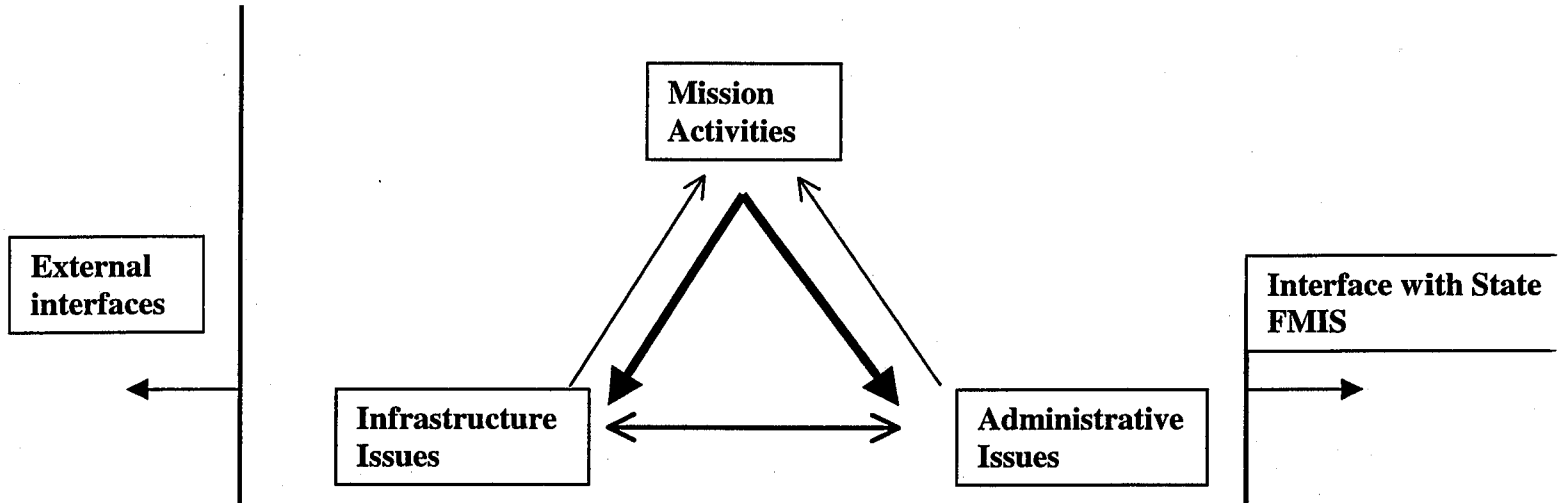
- ◆ Historically: UMATS is an example of collaboration to fill a need in an area that no single campus might undertake by itself; LIMS is an example of collaboration designed to give more effective service more efficiently; and the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement is an example of collaboration that takes unique advantage of the leveraging capabilities of the size of USM.
- ◆ While pedagogy is a campus based activity, and thus technology support should be campus based, there are common issues that might be better resolved collectively across multiple USM institutions. The first that comes to mind is that of engaging faculty in the use of new information technology tools that allow a rethinking of how and where information is transmitted as well as opportunities to enhance communication among class participants. In many instances this will involve substantial training of faculty to use new electronic tools. Since this is a universal need across campuses, highly leveraged approaches may be more efficient than having each campus deal with this issue individually.
- ◆ Another approach to making it easier and more efficient for faculty to integrate technology into courses is to develop a clearinghouse of reusable electronic course components such as models, simulations, demonstrations, images, animations, and text analyses. Rather than forcing each faculty member to create these components on an individual basis, tools are becoming available to allow such "learning objects" to be put into a common network accessible clearinghouse in such a manner that would allow other faculty members to be able to find a useful object and to incorporate it into another course. A traditional media analogy might be the use of "Course Packs" created by reusing articles and other print materials in forming a custom course resource.
- ◆ Research is also a campus based activity. On the other hand, no institution has all of the resources and colleagues that a researcher needs to be successful. Access to these resources and colleagues tends to be episodic and often requires travel. Next generation Internetworking will allow the development of "collaboratories" that allow access to resources and colleagues without leaving the office. Creation of such a collaborative environment is likely to be better done as a collective activity among USM institutions rather than forcing each institution to work out the issues individually.

- ◆ There is ongoing discussion regarding when might be the appropriate time to require students at USM institutions to have access to a network accessible computer. As these discussions proceed campuses can learn from pilot projects undertaken by departments and campuses more ready for such an initiative. Joint action in deciding how to implement such a requirement and establishing contracts that leveraging the size of the USM will benefit all institutions.

- ◆ The USM is mandated to “use the State FMIS for its budgeting, accounting, payroll, and human resources activities”. In order to be able to sensibly manage our institutions and meet this requirement, a clear understanding of how data is organized, managed, and used across the USM institutions needs to be created and maintained. This necessarily must be a cooperative effort across the USM campuses. Having successfully done this, other capabilities can follow. To the degree that data is coherent across campuses, better decision support tools can be put in place and consistent network based services such as authentication and authorization can be created.

- ◆ Given the diversity of missions across the USM institutions, each institution is likely to develop some unique partnerships. On the other hand, there are some opportunities to develop System-wide partnerships with multi-faceted companies that are seeking relationships with large, diverse higher education entities rather than one-off, more limited relationships at the institutional level.

Initial USM System-level Planning Themes



Mission Activities

- Pedagogy Using Technology
 - The Changing Classroom
 - Engaging the faculty
 - Training
 - Contemporary equipment
 - Office space and ergonomic design
 - Workload realignment
 - Dealing with the Intellectual Property issue
 - Support
- Libraries
 - Maryland Digital Library Program

Infrastructure Issues

- Assured Access for students
- Bandwidth
 - Vision for the future is network-centric
 - Network bandwidth has to grow into the future to support that vision
 - Some campuses are behind the curve, some are ok for now
 - UMATS is increasingly a bottleneck
- Remote Access
 - Need to be able to deliver electronic services to those who are non-resident on our campuses
- Administrative applications
 - Old and increasingly an impediment

Administrative Issues

- People
 - Recruit, train, retain technical talent
 - We are a net supplier of such talent in the marketplace
- Training and support of the computer user community
 - More people of varying levels of technology sophistication are increasingly depending on technology to do their business
- The Obsolescence Problem and Sustainable Funding
 - If technology is “just another activity on campus” then it should be funded as such
 - If it is a critical tool to support many mission critical activities, then when it fails they fail
 - Most campuses are struggling with how to fund technology in a sustainable way

Interface Issues

- We have a requirement to “use the FMIS as administered by the Executive Branch” for several HR, budgeting and accounting activities. How do we acceptably *meet* this requirement?
- We have to appear to the State and others as a coherent System rather than as 13 organizations with independent interfaces and data flows

LINKING I/T STRATEGIES TO INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

