Transforming IT *in* Higher Education

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Division of Information Technology
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Our Mission

The Division of information Technology delivers technology solutions and infrastructure that foster academic excellence and improve the student experience. Our mission is to support Valdosta State University's strategic goals through projects that encourage student retention and success, business continuity, efficiency, and innovation.

Our Vision

The Division of information Technology holds a vision to remain a strong strategic partner in achieving Valdosta State University goals and objectives by providing transformative technology solutions and direction for the university.

Written, prepared and edited by Malynda Dorsey

Editorial contributions from Brian Haugabrook, Sheila Hall, Isaac Barton, Sterlin Sanders, Joseph Newton and Benjamin Li

IT leadership photos, university landscape photos and building photos by Paul Leavy, university photographer

Additional photos by Malynda Dorsey, Sheila Hall, Katherine Ajluni and Cheyenne Jaglal

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CIO

"Innovative thinking and experiential learning go hand-in-hand in today's academic climate."

In today's academic climate – where innovative thinking and experiential learning go hand-in-hand – it is imperative that technology teams within higher education offer solutions that improve the overall student experience, enhance learning and instruction, easily integrate into everyday operations and simplify business processes. With this in mind, Valdosta State University's Division of Information Technology approaches each project with a strategic and flexible approach – making sure that each one aligns with the mission of the university at-large. The Division of Information Technology fosters a culture of creativity and innovation that has developed an award-winning portfolio of people, processes and technology.

As we continue to enhance the way we do IT, we welcome opportunities to collaborate with students, divisions and offices across campus to ensure the needs and expectations of our constituents are being met and exceeded. IT also continues to explore exciting opportunities to improve efficiency across the campus and ensure that Valdosta State's students, faculty and staff have access to training opportunities that allow them to maximize use and get the most of the technology they utilize.

I personally invite you to explore our annual report, review some of our major accomplishments this past year and learn about some of our future projects and initiatives.

BRIAN
HAUGABROOK

Chief Information Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past year, the Division of Information Technology has strived to introduce technology services and solutions that help the institution further its mission of fueling academic excellence, student success and recruitment and retention. With student success, business continuity, efficiency and innovation in mind, Information Technology identified the following major, multi-phase projects for the 2015-2016 academic year:

Enrollment Technology Support: Admissions, Centralized Advising and other offices can now leverage various technologies to help recruit, enroll, and retain students. A series of technology solutions have been introduced to address customer relationship management and develop multi-step automated communication plans.

Camera Upgrades: Safety is a top priority on the campus. We successfully upgraded several cameras on campus and worked closely with the safety committee and Public Safety on documenting the processes and roles required by all campus departments. IT currently supports more than 550 security cameras on campus. A new campus safety mobile app will be introduced to students in the fall to further contribute to their safety while on campus.

Competency-Based Education Reporting and Technology Support: This newly introduced initiative addresses students' ability to learn at their own pace. IT successfully worked with eLearning in the development of dashboards, analytics and reporting tools. This collaboration also garnered IT a $38,000 Innovation Grant Award for big data storage as part of the university's Project Innovate.

Success Portal/MyVSU Portal: VSU's student, faculty and staff portals have migrated to a new development environment to improve performance and customization of the applications. This project is a collaboration between IT, Web Services, Centralized Advising and the 70/80 Task Force on Student Retention.

Centralized Call Center: This is an initiative to develop a first tier customer support and concierge-type service for IT Helpdesk, the VSU Welcome Center, Admissions, and Financial Aid. The center handles basic call information and provides a very high level of customer service and satisfaction.

The following report includes additional successful projects introduced and completed over the past year, as well as a forecast for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

IT LEADERSHIP

LEFT TO RIGHT: Shawn Merdinger, Chief Information Security Officer; Sterlin Sanders, Assistant Director of Technical Support Services; Jason Gaskins, Assistant Director of Enterprise Applications & Analytics; Joe Newton, Chief Technology Officer; Malynda Dorsey, Assistant Director of IT Services; Ike Barton, Assistant Director of Enterprise Infrastructure Services; & Brian Haugabrook, Chief Information Officer.

Brian Haugabrook

Chief Information Officer

Strategic Vision & Leadership

Joe Newton

Chief Technology Officer

Technology Solutions & Purchasing

Sterlin Sanders

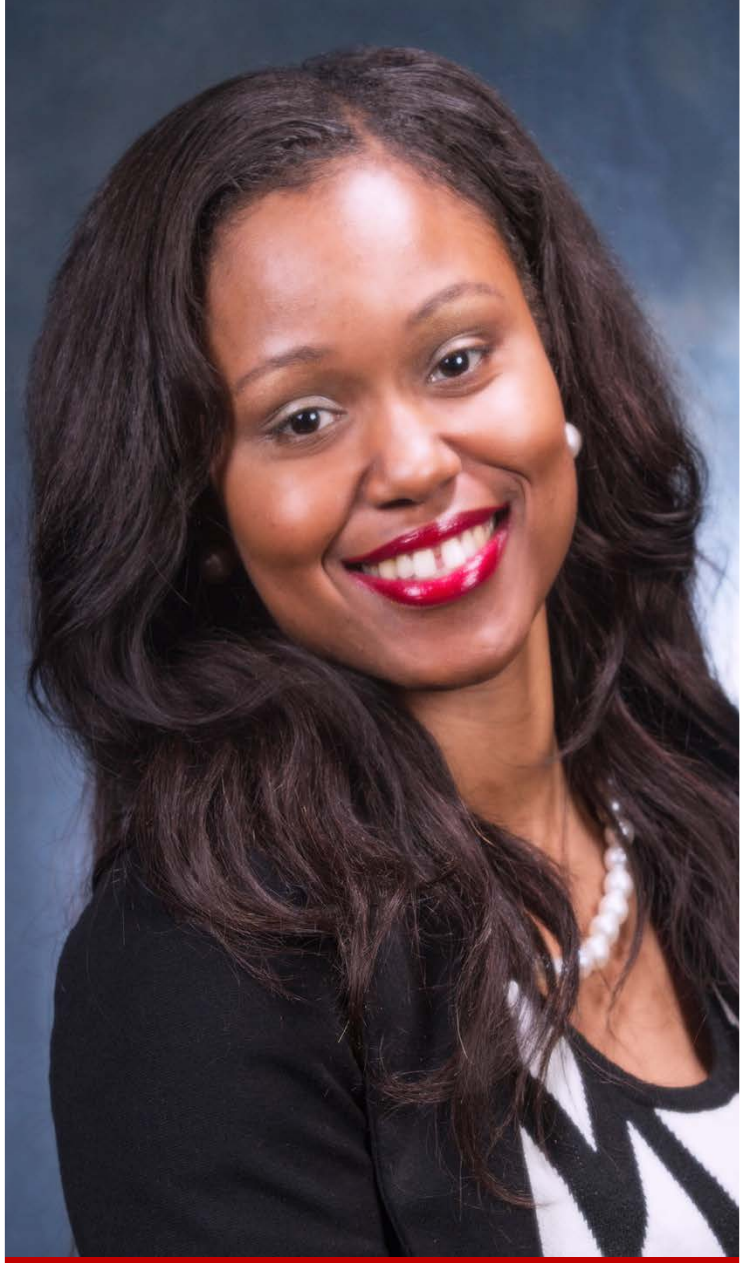
Assistant Director, Technical Support Services

Tier 1 & 2 Client Support

Ike Barton

Assistant Director, Enterprise Infrastructure Services

Networking & Critical Systems



Malynda Dorsey

Assistant Director, IT Services

Client Engagement & Communication

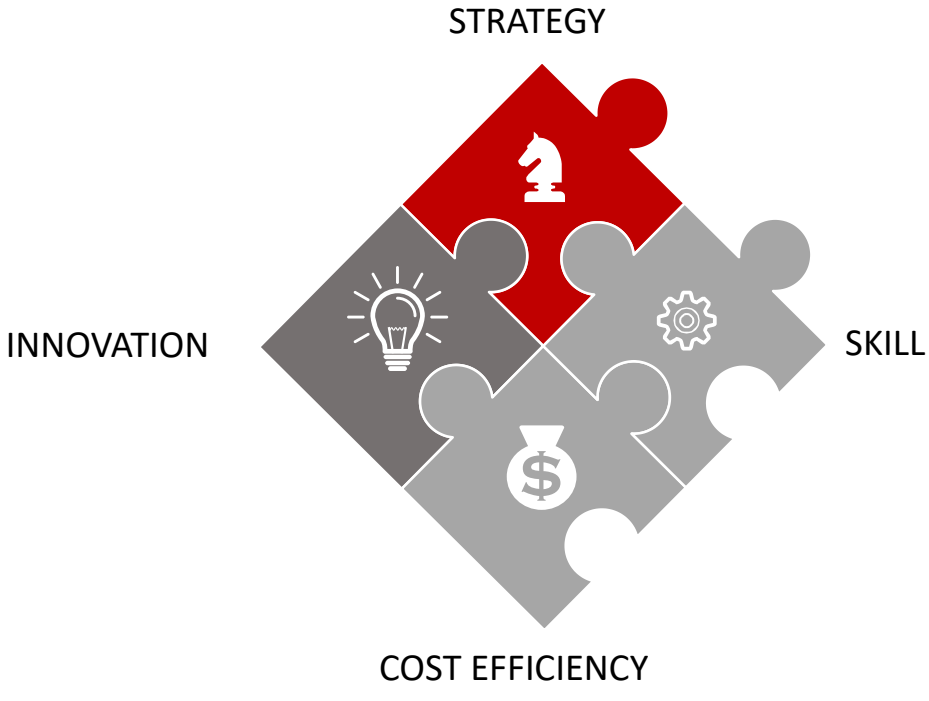
Jason Gaskins

Assistant Director, Enterprise Application Services

Programming & Analytics

ACADEMIC YEAR SUCCESSES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Each year, IT identifies major projects that align with the strategic goals of the university.



01

STUDENT SUCCESS

Solutions driven by analytics, engagement and a focus on the student experience have been introduced and enhanced to fuel success.

02

ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION

A focus on classroom technology to enhance instruction and learning served as a catalyst behind many partnerships and initiatives.

03

ENROLLMENT & RETENTION SUPPORT

Automated processes allowed leaders to rethink the way the university engages students – from recruitment to graduation.

04

OPERATIONS OPTIMIZATION

Business intelligence and analytics provide a different perspective on business and financial decisions.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Our top priority is student success.

Information Technology stands on the promise of improving the student experience, which has inspired the enhancement of many existing solutions and services offered at Valdosta State over the past year. In addition to introducing the new and improved V-State Mobile App, which offers push notifications and additional functionality, the division completed a $2.1 million wireless upgrade – increasing bandwidth and speed across all academic and residential buildings and introducing wireless on university shuttle buses. The division also migrated the university's single sign-on student portal, MyVSU, to a framework that combines analytics and visualizations for more personalized, interactive dashboards, added features for student engagement and improved integration with commonly used and critical university resources. Feedback from students during the initial stages of each project demonstrated IT's commitment to ensuring that the solutions and services met students' needs.

The Division of Information Technology also partnered with the Student Government Association, the Office of Career Opportunities and other student groups during the planning and launch of SGA elections, professional networking mixers and special dashboard projects.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND DRIVING SUCCESS!

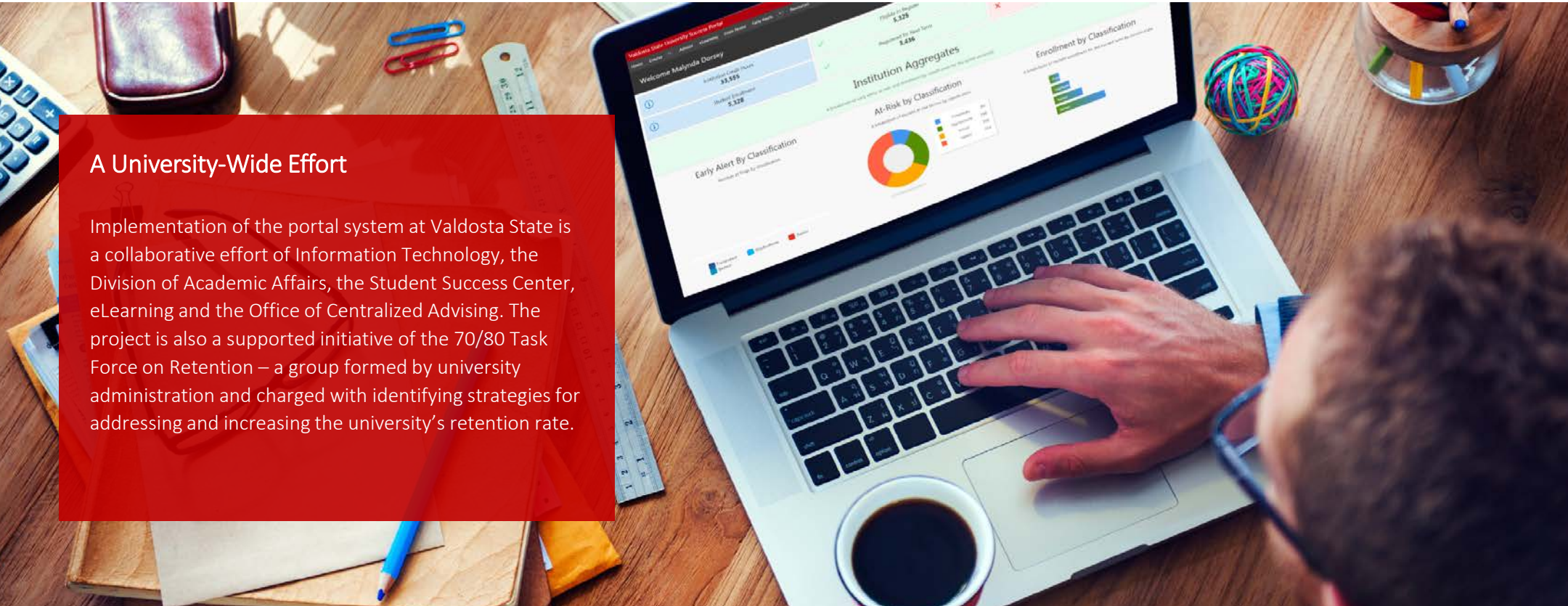
Through analytics, through engagement – we continuously maximize the use of technology to provide our students with the ultimate experience – inside and outside of the classroom.

SUCCESS PORTAL

New, enhanced portal drives retention and improved student experience.

Valdosta State University has released a new, enhanced version of the student success portal that combines early alert flagging with predictive analytics to track and improve student performance – with an overall goal of increasing retention and graduating more students.

The solution provides interactive dashboards, student profiles and messaging tools for faculty, advisors and student support staff to easily assess student performance and risk indicators that may contribute to or hinder students from being successful in their programs. Faculty are able to easily identify students within their courses who have high-risk factors and communicate with several offices including, but not limited to, the Office of Centralized Advising, the Student Success Center, Housing and Residence Life, the Counseling Center and the Access Office. Interactive dashboards are personalized for every faculty and staff member at Valdosta State to encourage centralized communication and behind-the-scenes collaboration to intervene early if needed and ultimately improve the student experience.



A University-Wide Effort

Implementation of the portal system at Valdosta State is a collaborative effort of Information Technology, the Division of Academic Affairs, the Student Success Center, eLearning and the Office of Centralized Advising. The project is also a supported initiative of the 70/80 Task Force on Retention – a group formed by university administration and charged with identifying strategies for addressing and increasing the university's retention rate.

"Using the portal in identifying and working with at-risk students is a consistent method of helping students be successful in their courses," said Dr. Greg Harrell, co-chair of the university's 70/80 Task Force on Retention and head of VSU's Department of Math. "I have personally used it and encourage all of my faculty to use it. Whenever performance or attendance seems to become an issue, faculty plug information into the portal and from there, students get immediate feedback from their advisors and other services on campus committed to helping them succeed."

Vickie Graham, a math lecturer within Harrell's department, has regularly used the existing portal to monitor her students' performance.

"I have been pleasantly surprised," said Graham. "Math builds up so much throughout a course, so if we can catch those who are falling behind after the first or second exam, we have a better chance of saving them from failure. The goal is, ultimately, to intervene before they get too far behind because the information accumulates as they get deeper and deeper into it. Whenever I have flagged students within the portal, advisors and tutors have responded very quickly to assist them and I usually see a huge difference in the students. The response has been great."

The new portal is mobile-device friendly for easier, quicker access and includes course rosters for faculty in different views – providing faculty with the options to create filters for categorizing or flagging students, flag multiple students at the same time or simply switch between viewing their rosters in a listed view or a photo flip card view. The system pulls data from other commonly used applications such as Banner and DegreeWorks so faculty can seamlessly view and update information without logging into multiple applications at the same time. Information from this portal is also used to determine what messages and attribute-driven ads students see on their MyVSU student portal dashboards.

Background on the Portal at VSU

The initial reporting portal was introduced at Valdosta State in Fall 2012 – providing faculty with on-demand access to student class loads and grades and promoting interaction between faculty, advisors, tutoring services and other resources. During the first semester of implementation, there was a 10 to 15 percent improvement in midterm and final grades .

Faculty who have used the solution since its inception have found it to not only contribute to improvement of student performance, but serve as an effective way of building stronger working relationships with their students.

"The generation of students we now have in the classroom see frequent contact and communication as a really good thing," said Dr. Kathleen Lowney, professor of sociology. "Use of the portal allows us, not only to intervene while there is still time to do so, but show our students that we care about them and their performance. I have been a strong supporter of the portal since it was introduced at the university."

The Office of Centralized Advising also quickly adopted the reporting system as a means of triaging support early and often to aid in student success and retention.

"The portal has become a part of our office culture," said Alicia Roberson, director of Centralized Advising. "As retention interventionists, we rely heavily upon the early alert triggers provided within the portal to assist us in how we communicate with our advisees. The faculty are our eyes and ears, so we regularly monitor the notes they place in the portal to ensure students are performing well and we stay on top of any risk indicators."

ACADEMIC ANALYTICS

In 2012, the Division of Information Technology released the university's first academic analytics and business intelligence environment. Strong executive support and communication from the president, interim provosts, VP of Enrollment and CIO led to a four percent increase in retention from 2012 to 2014 in freshman cohorts. Since 2012, Valdosta State University has become a leader in the University System of Georgia as well as a national leader for analytics in higher education.

Although VSU is a leader in academic analytics, executive leadership and support must drive the adoption and use of these innovative solutions.

Recent innovations in business intelligence at VSU serve as the introduction for predictive analytics. Information Technology and Institutional Research have developed several predictive models to forecast retention, progression, graduation, and course grades. The use of predictive analytics provides a foundation for early intervention and predicting success rates before the first day of class. In addition to academic analytics we are now able to incorporate engagement data to further improve the accuracy rate of our predictive models. By leveraging innovative technologies and establishing strategic partnerships, VSU is capable of delivering models with higher accuracy than the private companies that provide similar services.

Big data analytics is a buzz word used in many forums. While higher education has yet to fully analyze small data, VSU has established a framework for big data. Big data solutions at VSU have been used to track tens of thousands of daily transactions that include academics, engagement, participation, events, social and other data kept in our information resources. This platform enables strategic analytical and data-driven solutions across the entire student life-cycle, student experience, academic and non-academic resources.

Although VSU is a leader in academic analytics, executive leadership and support must drive the adoption and use of these innovative solutions. Faculty and advisors must have a leading role in improving this environment to enable more personalized content and support strategies for students. Constant communication with faculty and staff will help continue the adoption and cultural changes to further enhance our data-driven environment.

V-STATE MOBILE & MYVSU

An improved experience with university resources at students' fingertips.

PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCE

These platforms use data analytics and customizable dashboards to provide users with personalized experiences based on their roles with the university. Roles include current student, future student, faculty, staff and alumni.

CUSTOMIZABLE

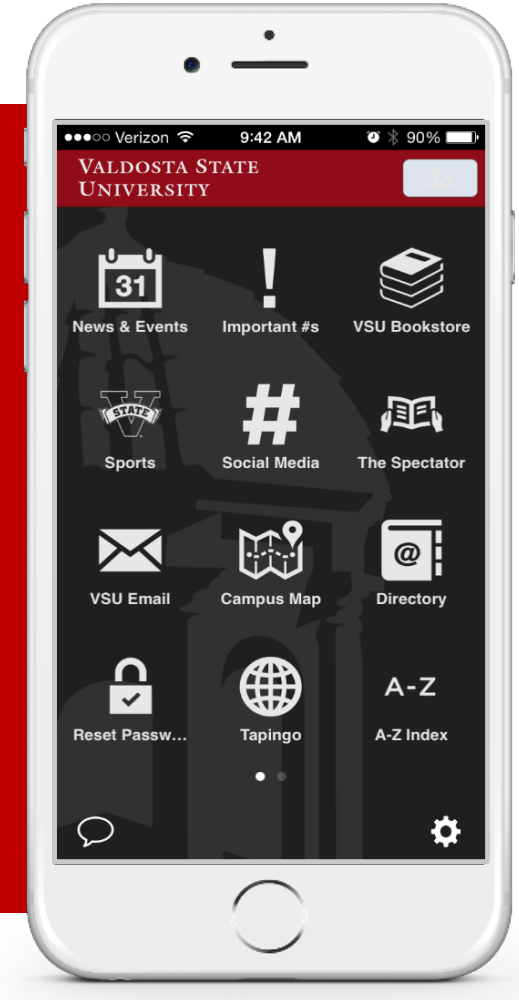
V-State Mobile provides users with the flexibility of selecting different module views, while MyVSU allows users to add various portals to their dashboards.

SINGLE SIGN-ON

The V-State Mobile App and MyVSU give users immediate access to regularly used and critical services, which include email, online courses, events, news, financial aid and registration pages.

REAL-TIME INFORMATION

Push notifications and up-to-date feeds provide students, faculty, staff, administration and alumni with the latest university news and activities.



ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION

Over the past academic year, Information Technology has worked with the colleges and departments to ensure that all classrooms and labs are equipped with the technologies needed for an innovative and engaged student learning experience. IT is also part of technology committees and special initiatives that explore how technology can be used to enhance instruction and drive academic excellence. Latest initiatives include STEAM Center technologies; reporting tools and dashboards for competency-based education; and a partnership with the Dewar College of Education & Human Services, K-12 school systems and RESA that assesses adoption of technology among Georgia educators.

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN STEAM EDUCATION

State-of-the-art technology deployed for learning and engagement in STEAM outreach

In 2014, $2.5 million from the Georgia Assembly budget was allocated for Valdosta State University to introduce a center for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) outreach initiatives, which included the renovation of Martin Hall. The center, which officially opened during the 2015-16 academic year, now serves as the central location for STEAM activities coordinated by the College of Arts & Sciences and Dewar College of Education & Human Services.

> "We established a goal to ensure that classrooms were user friendly and allowed students and teachers to interact with each other wirelessly with the use of their own mobile devices."

A hub for innovation, service learning and community engagement, the center houses cutting edge, interactive technology in a modern, relaxed setting – conducive to collaborative projects for university students and faculty as well as outreach activities for teachers and students in area K-12 schools.

Early on within the planning stages, university administration and project leaders asserted that the center was to present the most technologically advanced environment on campus – providing users and guests with a flexible, mobile and wireless experience.

"While this project would stretch our classroom technology skills, as we had never encountered the implementation of a fully wireless classroom environment, we readily accepted the challenge and proceeded with identifying essential resources to be installed in the building," said Sterlin Sanders, assistant director for Technical Support Services. "We established a goal to ensure that classrooms were user friendly and allowed students and teachers to interact with each other wirelessly with the use of their own mobile devices. Essentially, the plan was to create classrooms in which absolutely no wires or outlets were visible."

State-of-the-art mobile technology within the building includes six HP laptops and six iPads for each classroom and two 70-inch touchscreen Mondopads, which function as videoconferencing systems. The mobile technology offers a wide range of agility for use – with the iPads having the capability to control projector activity within one room at a time or all classrooms at once. The technology also provides access tokens for security adjustments based on administrators' and instructors' needs.

"The video conferencing system allows up to 30 mobile devices to interact simultaneously as well – whether participants are simply holding an open discussion or need to access and make edits to the same document, spreadsheets or presentations at the same time," Sanders said.

The technology syncs together for seamless communication through the use of a wireless collaborative presentation tool provided by Kramer Electronics USA.

“To gain a fully wireless experience, we knew we would have to think outside the box when it came to syncing devices as most technology is proprietary,” Sanders said. “We knew that if we brought in Apple TVs, we would only be able to use Apple mobile devices, just as many display devices only catered to PCs and Android devices. However, after extensive research, we identified the Kramer technology, which was within suitable cost and interacts with mobile devices and built-in classroom technology across platforms and operating systems.”

With the STEAM Center now fully operational, it has already become the hub for innovative workshops and seminars, engineering and technology camps, professional development activities and research planning.

“There are many areas of opportunity for creativity within the STEAM Center,” said Sanders. “The technology gives teachers the flexibility to create their own learning environments with almost limitless capabilities and also allows students to learn new concepts in education while utilizing the most current mobile technology.”

IT members involved in this project include Sanders, Adrian Taylor, Sarah Bring, Ike Barton, Kanan Simpson, Alfred Reed, Dustin Watson and Rocky Rothwell.

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

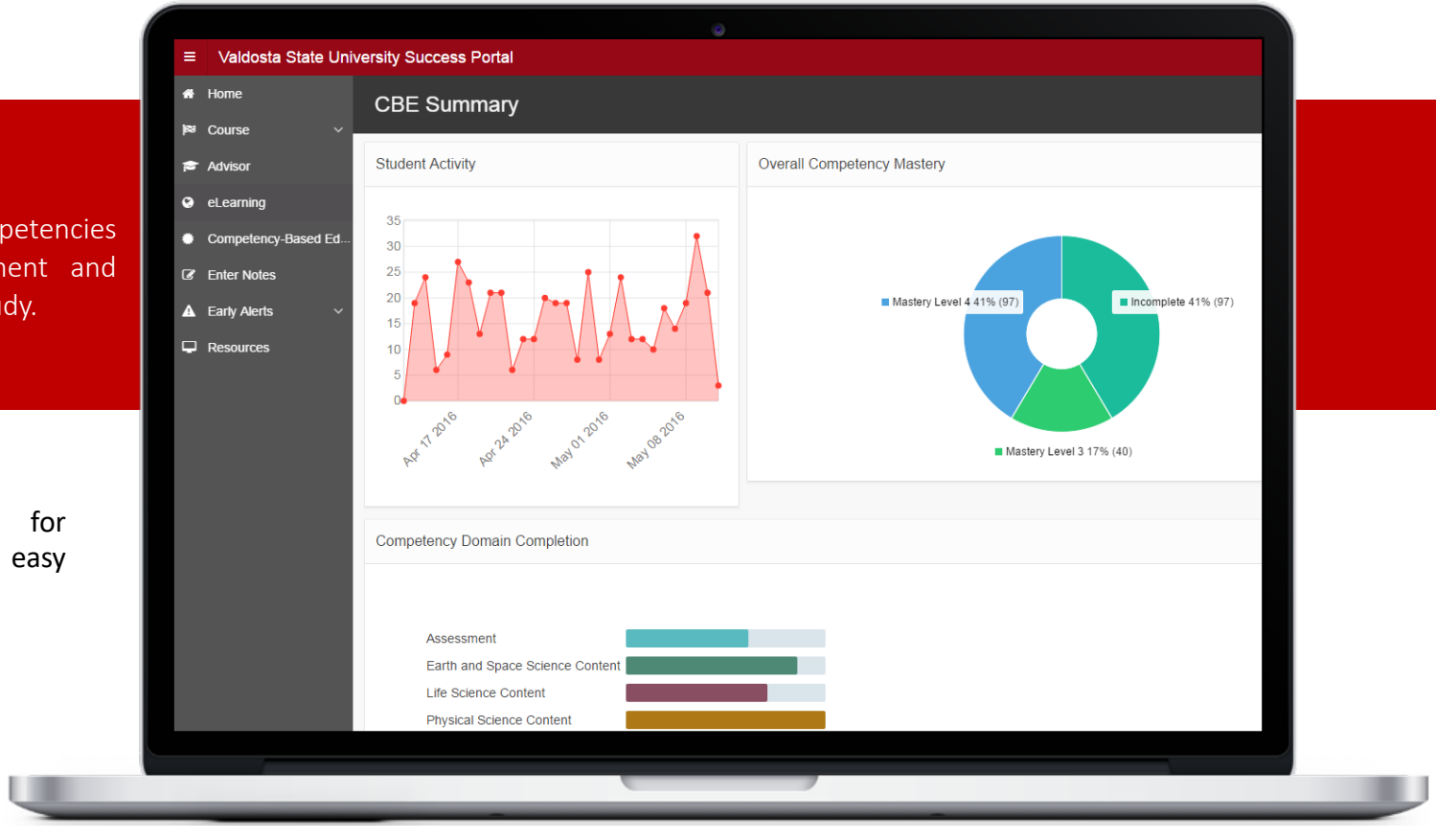
The newly introduced initiative that addresses students' ability to learn at their own pace.

CLIENT: COEHS & ELEARNING

Identifies the skills and competencies required for a specific endorsement and applies them across disciplines of study.

DELIVERY:

- Real-time student data for performance tracking and easy reporting.
- Dashboards that provide data visualization.



Valdosta State launched its first online competency-based education initiative in Spring 2016 with 10 school teachers from area public schools – offering courses that would allow them to earn a science endorsement.

BEYOND HIGHER ED: IT LEADERS CONNECT

Valdosta State IT Collaborates with K-12 Technology Leaders

Information Technology, in conjunction with Coastal Plains Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), hosted a Technology Leaders Collaborative Meeting, which brought IT leaders in higher education and K-12 schools together, on March 23.

Technology directors and coordinators discussed challenges and opportunities surrounding technology and how it is used to enhance classroom instruction – both at institutions of higher education and in grade schools.

Keith Osburn, technology and special programs director of Jeff Davis County Schools, led a discussion on how his school system implemented a teacher-managed video instruction initiative through Safari Montage as part of its efforts to establish Future Ready classrooms.

Dr. Don Leech, associate dean of Valdosta State's College of Education and Human Services provided a brief update on recent updates from the college on how students are being prepared for work in the classrooms. He also welcomed feedback on the perceived preparedness of teachers coming into the school systems after graduating from VSU.

During a roundtable discussion, attendees discussed topics such as synchronization between technologies, site backups and disaster recovery plans, and platforms that help students learn how to code.

Schools represented include Colquitt County Schools, Ben Hill County Schools, Echols County Schools, Lowndes County Schools, Berrien County Schools, Lanier County Schools, Brooks County Schools, Cook County Schools, Jeff Davis County Schools, Valdosta City Schools. Representatives from Coastal Plains RESA and Southwest RESA also attended. Representatives from Valdosta State's IT include Dwayne Trouille (event coordinator), Sheila Hall, Malynda Dorsey, Adrian Taylor, Isaac Barton, Sterlin Sanders and Brian Haugabrook.

Aftermath

Information Technology has partnered with the College of Education to establish a model classroom lab, complete with technology that allows education faculty and teachers-in-training to become familiar with technology used in K-12 classrooms. IT is also working with the college and area school systems to introduce more training and collaboration opportunities.

ENROLLMENT IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

WE DELIVER SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT ONGOING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

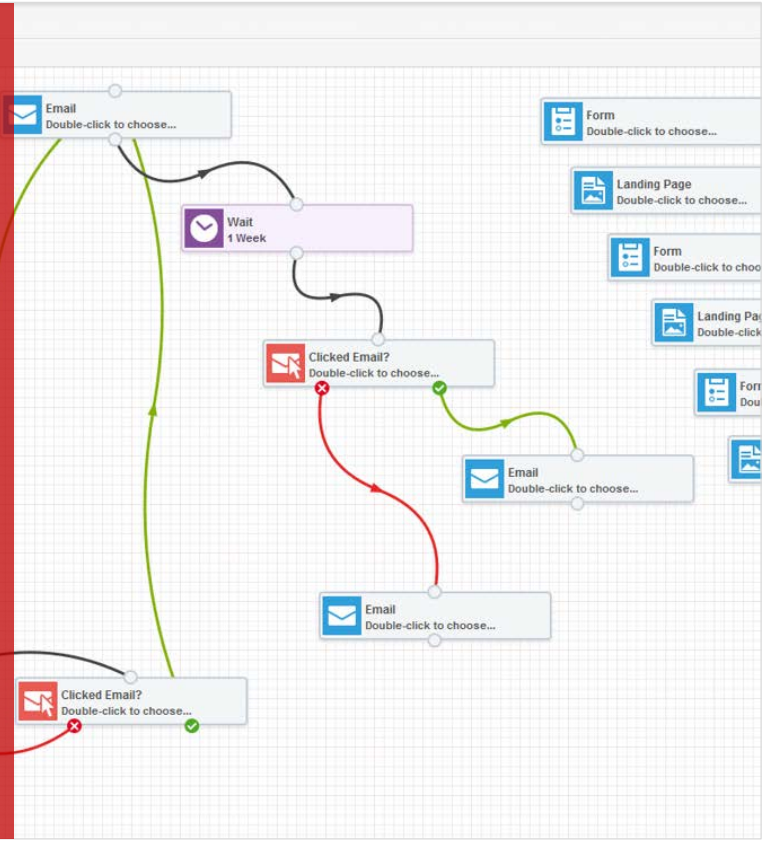
"Enrollment should be EVERYONE'S BUSINESS."

ENROLLMENT TECHNOLOGIES

Ongoing innovative technology and technical support for recruitment and retention

DELIVERY :

Information Technology worked with Admissions to establish an enhanced system to monitor the progress of prospective students and develop a robust, automated communication plan, which includes the mass distribution of print and electronic mail as well as the social engagement of prospects throughout the recruitment cycle.



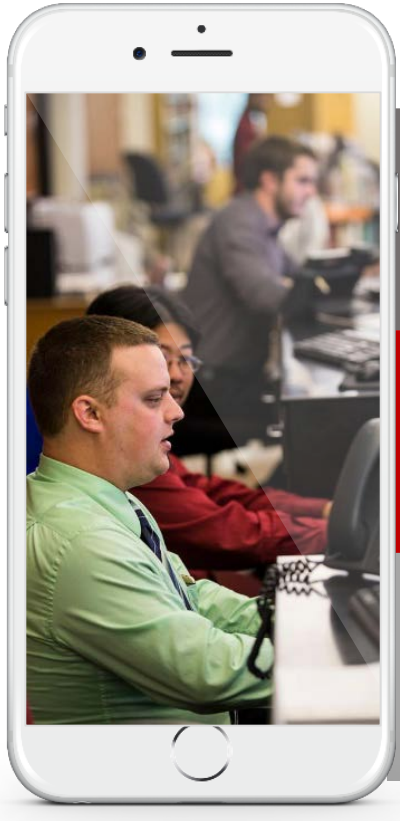
CLIENT: ENROLLMENT SERVICES

Valdosta State's enrollment team requested customer relationship management and automated communication tools that allow them to reach the following outcomes.

- Increase conversion rate between recruits/inquiries and applicants.
- Improve reporting and territory monitoring strategies and improve territory management.
- Improve the level of technical support for Enrollment Services.
- Decrease duplicate contacts that are entering customer relationship management system.

SOLUTIONS CENTER

A central location for routing 200,000+ annual calls received from students, prospective students and parents



01 Transition the majority of telephone traffic to the solutions center to allow Undergraduate Admissions staff to re-focus on other projects and support.

02 Improve student experience by reducing queue wait times and, in the long term, implementing end-to-end case management.

03 Track combined telephone traffic at the solution center to guide future strategic initiatives, such as automation or pre-emptive communication to reduce call volume and better meet student needs.

STREAMLINING COMMUNICATION

The call center includes operators who represent each office (Admissions, Welcome Center, Financial Aid, Helpdesk) and are well-versed and equipped with resources to assist with caller inquiries and concerns. Pre-defined outcomes are assigned to each call with notes on any issues resolved during calls as well as instruction on any needed follow-up. Operators are well-trained on the call center solution and respective office business process prior to launch. The ultimate goal of the call center is to improve the experience of our students and other constituents.

A limited concierge-type service also assists students, prospective students and parents who have unique needs or require multiple services with one point-of-contact to accommodate all requests. Other services include the development of a student portfolio based on call frequency that provides students with the information and resources they need while cutting down on call frequency; thus, saving time and money.

OPERATIONS OPTIMIZATION

Technology should not only simplify your personal experience; it should also transform your organizational processes and impact the way you make business decisions.

WIRELESS UPGRADE BOOSTS CONNECTIVITY

Delivering on heightened signal strength and speed.

> We ultimately wanted to improve the user experience significantly – especially among the students within the residence halls…We also wanted to make sure visitors could gain fast and easy access to our wireless network while on our campus.

For quite some time, Valdosta State University had experienced issues with wireless in its academic and residential spaces. This presented a significant challenge for faculty who encouraged students to bring their own devices into the classrooms and wished to explore the use of various technologies for an engaged student learning experience. Students – especially those who lived on campus – often experienced limited connectivity and signal strength. With the average college student owning five or more technology devices, there was a need for more bandwidth to keep up with student demand.

"Not only were we challenged with being able to accommodate the growth of innovation within the classrooms; we found ourselves in a place where our reputation was in jeopardy," said Isaac Barton, assistant director of Enterprise Infrastructure Services. "On any given day, if you looked up Valdosta State or VSU wireless, you would get about 100 hits on how horrible the wireless was. Faced with a PR nightmare on our hands, we knew we had to do something."

Information Technology leadership realized that more resources needed to be allocated for a robust network infrastructure that would improve access and ease of use while also supporting services like IPTV and VOIP.

"We ultimately wanted to improve the user experience significantly – especially among the students within the residence halls," said Barton. "One of the things we specifically told potential vendors when exploring solutions was that we wanted to stop all of the negative feedback we were receiving on social media because it made our division and institution look bad. We also wanted to make sure visitors could gain fast and easy access to our wireless network while on our campus."

Research

The Division of Information constantly strives to establish new standards and best practices that not only enhance academic instruction and improve the student experience, but can also be adopted by other institutions and organizations.

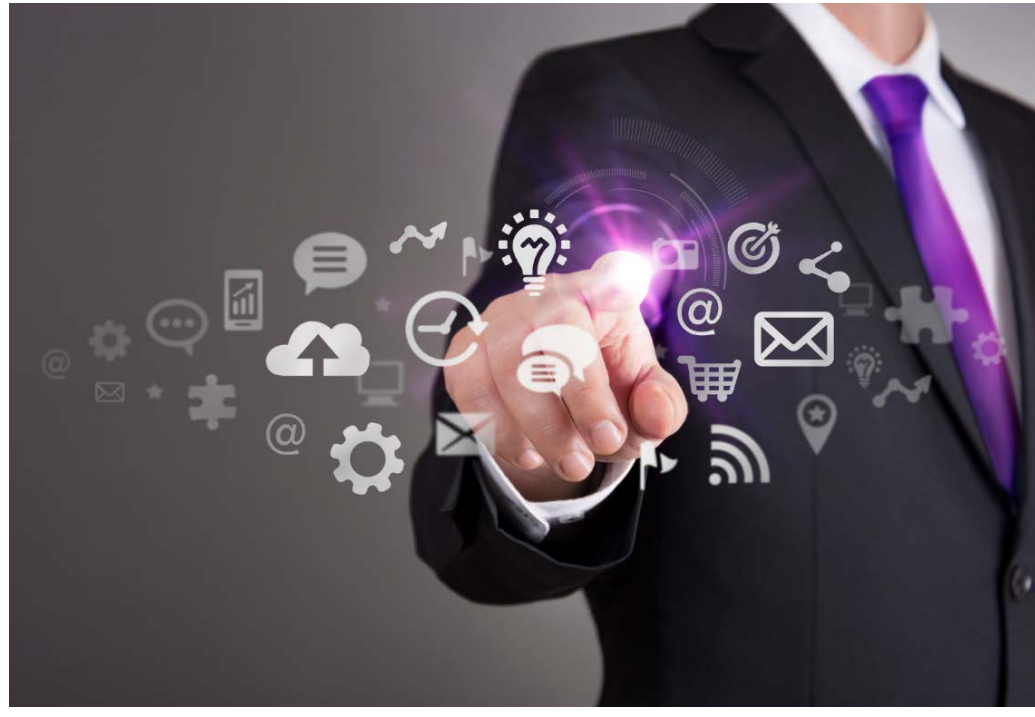
With this in mind, the division explored solutions inside and outside of higher education during its vendor selection process. For insight on delivering the best wireless access within residence halls, the team looked at how companies within the hospitality industry were deploying access points to provide the best service for their guests. Likewise, the team explored other industries that had successfully established a BYOD (bring your own device) culture among employees and constituents to assist in developing a model that would best accommodate all students, faculty, staff and administration.

IT wanted to make sure that its vendor selection decision was made with the student experience in mind, so at the beginning of the 2014-2015 academic year, the network services team placed a demo network in one residence hall and allowed student residents to use it for a semester. The team replaced the demo with one from another vendor the following semester and then surveyed the students on which service they preferred.

Students and IT professionals agreed that Cisco provided the better wireless experience in terms of connectivity, bandwidth and management. From there, IT entered into an agreement with Presidio and Cisco to deploy a wireless network that covers more than three million square feet – with approximately 2,000 access points in more than 80 buildings campus-wide.

Implementation

Led by Network Services Specialist Kanan Simpson, the team kicked off the wireless project June 2015 and completed the project in March 2016. The team started in the residence halls, placing access points within each residential unit, and quickly noticed a significant drop in complaints about the wireless.



The number of work orders for wireless support has reduced by 40 percent while the number of work orders for gaming device assistance has declined by 90 percent when compared to the same time the previous year. The wireless upgrade also allowed the university to introduce live TV and DVR capabilities to the campus through IPTV in November 2015, providing significant cost savings to the campus.

Observations & Summary

Today, the helpdesk receives few to no complaints about the university's wireless network – most of which are found to involve issues related to client devices rather than the actual wireless network. At the university's most recent open house, which welcomes anywhere from 500 to 1,200 prospective students to the campus, IT leaders were able to express with confidence that Valdosta State University has "the best wireless within the state's university system."

TECHNICAL RESPONSE UNIT

The Technical Response Unit (TRU) initiative is designed to maintain a quality customer service experience for VSU constituents while increasing efficiency and improving the responsiveness of Information Technology technicians. It introduces strategies to establish a 15-minute response time to any call regardless of its location and gradually reduce the costs associated with staffing labs across campus.

The prior model included student lab assistants, funded by student technology fees, in each lab who typically observed patrons and refilled paper within the printers. To avoid further exhaustion of student tech fees, IT reduced the number of student lab monitors and strategically placed student technicians in specific zones throughout the campus. These technicians work with departmental faculty and administrative staff to address technical issues within the 15-minute response time.

CCTV surveillance cameras are placed into the computer labs that are no longer staffed with student lab assistants to ensure the security of technology within the labs.

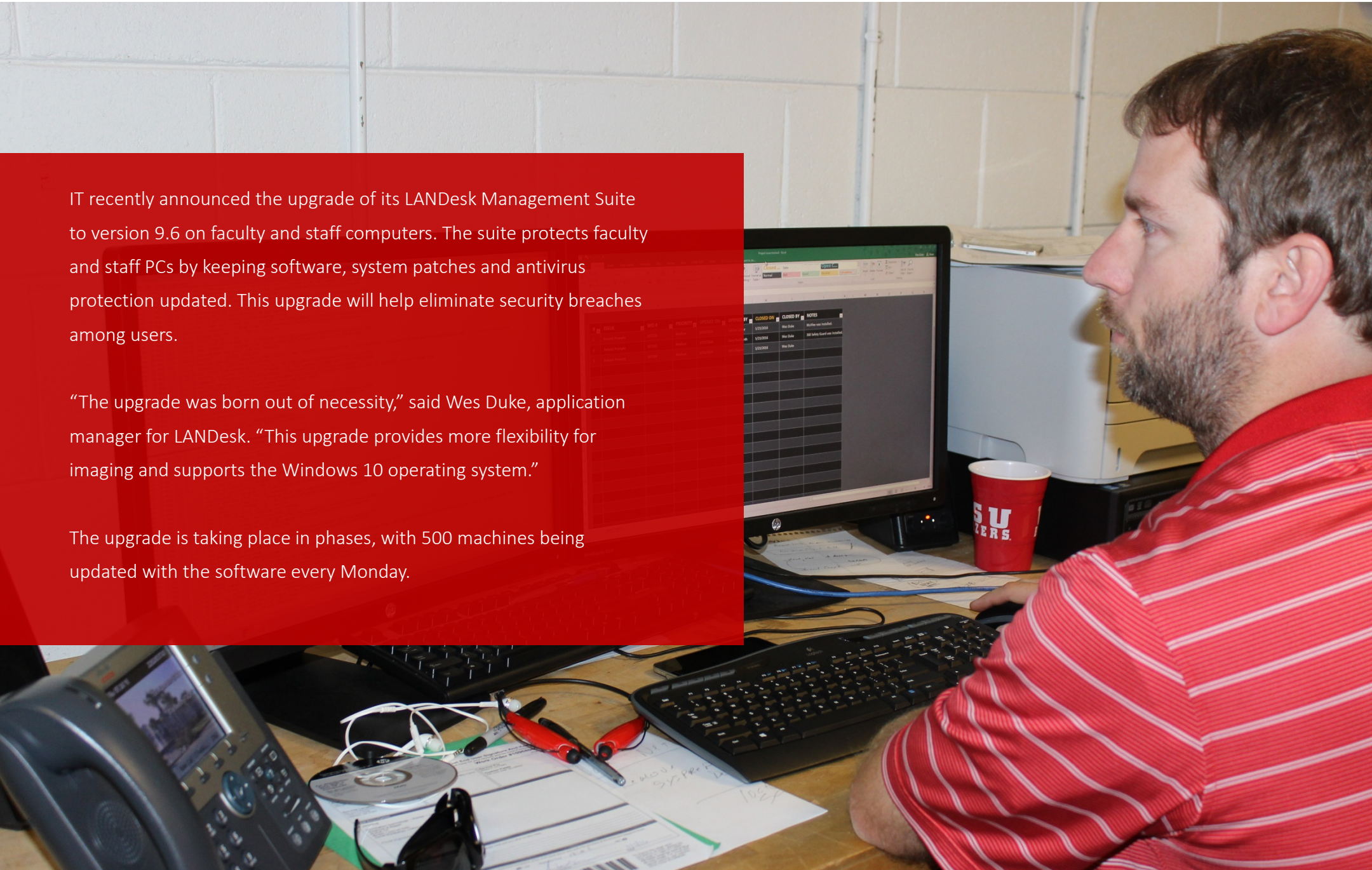
The TRU coordinator, Quinncy Thomas, is responsible for overseeing the workflow of staff and student technicians who support the technology needs of the faculty, staff, and students of VSU. The TRU coordinator ensures that all specialists and technicians are properly trained and are maintaining a 15-minute response time.

The pilot of this initiative was launched in August 2014 by relocating student lab assistants assigned to eight labs within Odum Library to the Pine Hall IT shop and installing cameras within each lab. As a result of a successful pilot, we implemented a plan to gradually convert labs within other departments to match this model.

Over time, this is intended to generate a 70 percent reduction of the lab assistant pool across the campus.

This project frees up student technology fees to be invested toward other projects that enhance classroom and lab technologies and demonstrates Information Technology's commitment to being good stewards of the student fees allocated to technology.

LATEST UPGRADE: LANDESK



IT recently announced the upgrade of its LANDesk Management Suite to version 9.6 on faculty and staff computers. The suite protects faculty and staff PCs by keeping software, system patches and antivirus protection updated. This upgrade will help eliminate security breaches among users.

“The upgrade was born out of necessity,” said Wes Duke, application manager for LANDesk. “This upgrade provides more flexibility for imaging and supports the Windows 10 operating system.”

The upgrade is taking place in phases, with 500 machines being updated with the software every Monday.

A LOOK INTO CRITICAL SYSTEMS

Developing best practices that become the standard within IT

Information Technology's Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) team at Valdosta State University prides itself on developing procedures and best practices that become the standard within IT. Collectively, the unit has worked to not only provide reliable data connectivity and wireless access to every area across campus through a $2.1 million wireless project, but also develop a state-of-the-art data center that houses most of the university's enterprise systems.

In the last two years, the EIS Systems Operations (Sys Ops) team has removed up to 78 percent of the hardware-based servers within the data center – reducing the amount of power used within the center by approximately 45 percent. The consolidation of multiple servers on very few physical host servers has allowed for improved deployment of applications, reduced downtime and quicker disaster recovery. The design allows for continual growth of servers in a more condensed area. The conservation of space, energy and operational expenses result in thousands of dollars in direct and indirect costs savings over time.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Jody Hudnall, Ken Gutierrez, Rocky Rothwell, Ike Barton, Dwayne Trouille, Michael Young, David Pierce.

The work of the Sys Ops team has garnered the University System of Georgia's stamp of approval in a recent audit of IT's critical systems inventory. IT was successful in earning the highest level of maturity – demonstrating procedures that are well-measured, controlled and focused on improvement while highlighting inventory documentation that is greater than 90 percent and regularly updated. Valdosta State's IT division is one of six in the university system, and the only comprehensive university, to achieve this status.

"We owe this outstanding report to the efforts of the Systems Operations team," said Ike Barton, assistant director of EIS. "The Sys Ops team provides foundational support for our critical services. Knowing where and what those critical assets are is paramount to the security of those services."

Sys Ops Coordinator Dwayne Trouille said that developing a polished process has "truly been a team effort."

"While focus has been placed on our inventory list, a good bit of our effort has gone into our disaster and recovery plan and making sure that it is consistent with what is outlined within the USG IT's Continuity of Operations Planning guidelines," Trouille said.

Team members have worked together to document procedures for the data center manager, Jody Hudnall, who compiled, updated and formalized information. Sys Ops team members include Dwayne Trouille, Jody Hudnall, Michael Young and Ken Gutierrez. Network Services Specialist Rocky Rothwell also works very closely with Sys Ops to provide networking support for the data center. Former team members who have also been instrumental include David Pierce, Annon Beepath and Rhett Burroughs.

"Information Technology is part of the fabric of the university," said Brian Haugabrook, chief information officer at VSU. "Technology affects almost every aspect of any industry, especially higher education and learning. Having a strong infrastructure and foundation in IT is the backbone of supporting any innovative solution or initiative. The VSU IT division continues to show leadership in all areas of technology. The staff members and leaders are dedicated to ensuring VSU has a strong, secure technology foundation and that they continuously improve the student experience."

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IT OPERATIONAL ANALYTICS

How we use data to make organizational decisions

LAB UTILIZATION

A reporting tool is used to monitor and record campus lab utilization to present to internal and external stakeholders. This fosters discussion on long-term strategies regarding space utilization. Information Technology recommends that constituents always take data into consideration as funds spent on computers could support other classroom or academic initiatives.

PHONE SERVICE

IT determined that over time, thousands could be saved by reducing voice over IP (VoIP) capacity during non-peak hours. Reducing the number of active PRIs (high-speed digital connections) from six to five during slow usage hours provides the benefit of cost savings without impacting the quality of services.

PRINTERS & COPIERS

While replacing older model printers with newer multi-function models, IT collected usage data to identify underutilized printers. This data was used to identify areas for costs savings, as these printers are funded by student technology fees. The number of printers decreased from 55 to 40 without impacting university operations. A card swipe system, wireless printing and printer portal were also introduced to the students for easier, faster printing options.

ENGAGEMENT

In addition to social media monitoring and engagement tools, IT has leveraged the used of surveys and polls throughout the academic year to assess the quality of service delivery among various constituencies. As part of a subcommittee for the 70/80 Task Force on Retention, IT members also helped organize a series of focus groups to assess the value, usability and features of the new Success Portal.

FINANCIAL ANALYTICS

Data visualization and dashboards for real-time financial reporting.

CLIENT: BUDGET MANAGERS

During the development of the data warehouse in 2012, IT established a focus on financial analytics to ensure budget managers were empowered to maximize use of financial data to make better business decisions.

DELIVERY:

Improved Visibility: Introduced an integrated view of multiple charts of accounts from various financial source systems for consistent financial metrics.

Financial Accountability and Best Practices: Introduced effective management of budgets based on easy generation of financial reports and historical trends.

Better Management: Consistent insight into payments to vendors and expenses, real-time financial data across the university and timely identification of outstanding purchase orders and contracts for better management of budgetary spending.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Forecast for 2016 - 2017

ENHANCED SECURITY

Not only do we pride ourselves on exemplary cybersecurity outreach. We also work with University Police to provide the latest in security and alert technology to ensure the overall safety of our students, faculty and staff.

SYSTEMS STATUS ALERTS

Our new service status system will keep users up-to-date on any changes with the functionality of popular and critical systems used on campus.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

In addition to outreach activities such Orientation and Open House, we will establish a student technology committee to serve as a liaison group between IT and the student body.

A TEAM WITH A PASSION
FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

The Division of Information Technology has established itself as a leader among IT teams nationwide because of its award-winning team of technology experts !

"...because we believe in what we do."

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

We pride ourselves on delivering excellent, award-winning service.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

- Chancellors' Gold Award for Customer Service – IT Helpdesk
- Honorable Mention Service Award – Sterlin Sanders

UNIVERSITY BUSINESS

- Models of Efficiency for Data Warehouse & Enrollment Management – March 2013
- Models of Efficiency for Lab Training Program – Dec. 2013
- Models of Excellence – Actionable Intelligence

CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY

- Deploying Business Intelligence for Increased Retention – 2014
- Speeding Up IT Support through Technical Response Unit – 2016

COMPUTERWORLD

- IDG Enterprise' Premier 100 IT Leaders – Brian Haugabrook

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

We pride ourselves on delivering excellent, award-winning service.

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

- Employee of the Semester Fall 2014 – Adrian Taylor
- Employee of the Semester Nominees – Benjamin Li, Alfred Reed, Ike Barton, Mykhael Walker, Xavier Cheevers, Brian Haugabrook, Sterlin Sanders

VALDOSTA STATE "I CAUGHT YOU CARING" 2016 RECIPIENTS

Ben Li, Lorrie Proal, Sheila Hall, Brian Haugabrook, Shawn Merdinger, Sterlin Sanders, Joseph Newton, Chad Vantine, Jason Gaskins, Adrian Taylor, Maurice Mondesir, Landon Lamb, Matthew Flannigan, Nicholaus Clinite, Wesley Babcock, Steven Obst, Alex Malos, Clinton Cauley

VALDOSTA STATE "I CAUGHT YOU CARING" 2016 RECIPIENTS

(Continued) Corey Wasley, Na Ding, Hunter Baxter, Gwen Kyles, Markaysa Robinson, Shaquille Duncan, Christian Palaypayon

OVUM ON THE RADAR AWARD

- On the Radar Award for Innovation in Analytics & Big Data – 2015

MEET OUR GREAT TEAM

IT ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP

Brian Haugabrook, Chief Information Officer
Gwendolyn Kyles, Assistant to the CIO
Joseph “Joe” Newton, Chief Technology Officer
Malynda Dorsey, Assistant Director of IT Services
Sheila Hall, Training and Communication Specialist
Penelope Croft, IT Project Manager
Lorrie Proal, IT Procurement Specialist
Shawn Gibbons, Telecommunications Specialist

INFORMATION SECURITY

Shawn Merdinger , Chief Information Security Officer
Chad Vantine, Information Security Assistant
Maurice Mondesir, Information Security Assistant

TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Sterlin Sanders, Assistant Director
Brian Anderson, Systems Support Coordinator
Wesley Babcock, Computer Services Specialist
Sarah Bring, Computer Services Specialist
Wade Bugby, Technical Support Specialist/ Asset Manager
Xavier Cheevers, Computer Specialist
Bobby Wes Duke III, Desktop Specialist
Matthew Flannigan, Computer Operator I
Doug Jordan, Computer Operator I
Markaysa Robinson, Computer Operator I
Adrian Taylor, TSS Classroom / Event Support Manager
Quinncy Thomas, TRU Coordinator
Steven Obst, Computer Operator I
Benjamin Li, Helpdesk, Computer Services Coordinator
Alexandru Malos Helpdesk, Computer Operator I
Corey Wasley, Computer Services Specialist

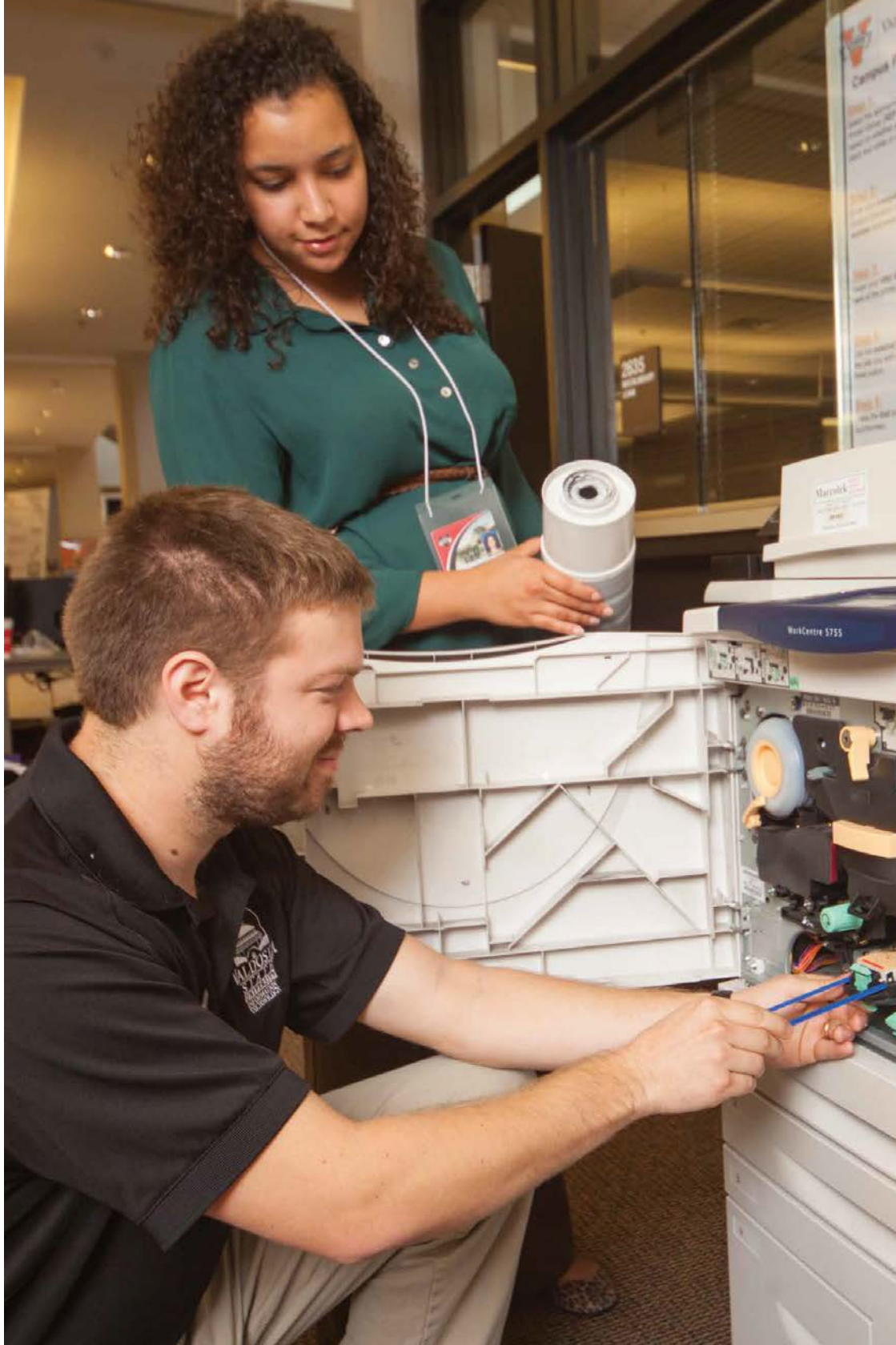
ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS & ANALYTICS

Jason Gaskins, Assistant Director
Nicholas Clinite, Programmer Analyst Associate
Na Ding, Programmer Analyst Coordinator
Ralph Gosnell, Programmer Analyst Associate
Greg Henderson, Programmer Analyst Coordinator
Vince Houston, Computer Operations Coordinator
Mike Johns, Database Services Specialist
Linnie Kinard, Programmer Analyst Associate
David Mohrfeld, Programmer Analyst Associate
James Powell, Computer Operator I
David Pulliam, Programmer Analyst Specialist
Art Rinberger, Programmer Analyst Coordinator
Keisha Roberts, Data Warehouse Information Analyst
Mykhael Walker, Programmer Analyst Associate

MEET OUR GREAT TEAM

ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Isaac “Ike” Barton, Assistant Director
Ghufran Ahmed, Network Operations Manager
Hunter Baxter, Computer Operator I
Clinton Cauley, Systems Services Assistant
Steve Cline, Auxiliary Systems Coordinator
Cliff Giddens, Systems Services Associate
David Golden, Network Services Specialist|
Kenneth Gutierrez, Systems Services Associate
R. Jody Hudnall, Computer Operator I
Travis Nolley, Systems Services Associate
Brian Truter, System Services Associate
Alfred Reed, Computer Operator I
Rocky Rothwell, Networking Services Specialist
Jeremy Scott, Workgroups Coordinator
Kanan Simpson, Network Services Specialist
Grant Sloan, Systems Services Associate
Dwayne Trouille, Systems Operations Coordinator
Dustin Watson, Network Services Assistant
Ricky Wisenbaker, Network Services Associate
Michael Young, Computer Services Specialist



WHAT WE DO

Delivering transformative technology solutions, team by team.

IT ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP

Under the direction of the CIO, the admin group lays the foundation for the division through strategic directives, communication and training, project management and technology purchasing. This team ensures that technology is not only properly implemented and adopted, but also assists in fulfilling the strategic goals of the institution.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

TSS handles first and second tier support services, which include classroom and desktop support as well as helpdesk and technical response. The team is comprised of technicians who deliver immediate end-user support and application managers who specialize in software that can be found on most computers such as Deep Freeze, LANDesk and LabStats.

ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS & ANALYTICS

The EAS & EAA team is comprised of experts in the areas of programming, database management, software development and web development. Many experts deliver custom applications and dashboards while others specialize in commonly-used applications such as Banner and D2L.

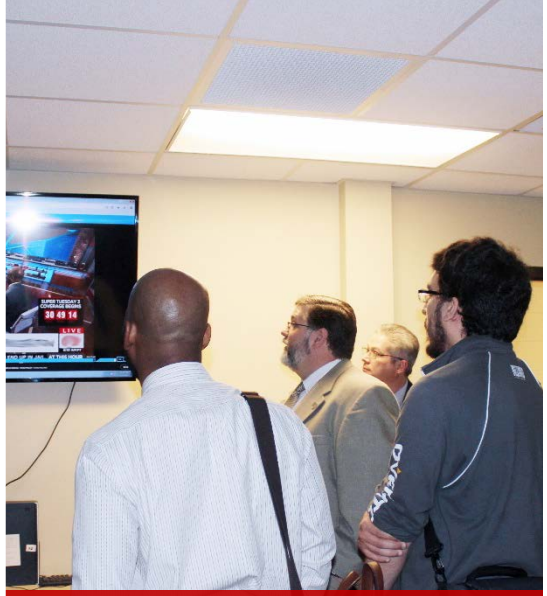
INFORMATION SECURITY

The Information Security team works to ensure the safe and protective flow of information through various critical systems used throughout the university. Information Security consistently promotes user awareness to strengthen the resilience of the university by limiting security related threats. This team works closely with University police to ensure safety campus-wide.

ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

EIS works to provide reliable data connectivity and wireless access to every area across campus and has also developed a state-of-the-art data center that houses most of the university's enterprise systems. This team also handles Tier 3 level systems support for Active Directory Services, Office 365 cloud-based email, and campus file and printer sharing.

Alfred Reed, Spring 2016 Employee of the Semester nominee



Columbus State visits Valdosta State

Dwayne Trouille, coordinator for "Technology Leaders in Higher Education and K-12 Collaborate"

Art Rinberger, one of the Top 10 Apex Dashboard Competition winners

Linnie Kinard, Shawn Gibbons and Lorrie Proal are now certified contract administrators

The Technical Support Services team poses after hosting IT members from Albany State University and Darton State

IT leaders at the Office of Career Opportunities' networking event

Columbus State visits Valdosta State