



Valdosta State University
College of Education & Human Services

COEHS Technology Plan

May 2016

Committee Membership

The 2015-16 College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) Technology Committee was comprised of the following voting members:

- Jennifer Beal-Alvarez – Assistant Professor, Middle Grades, Secondary, Reading, & Deaf Education
- Matthew Carter, Committee Chair – Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Steve Downey – Associate Professor, Curriculum, Leadership, & Technology
- Jessica Graves – Early Childhood, Special Education
- Lana Kim – Assistant Professor, Marriage and Family Therapy
- Michael Sanger – Associate Professor, Social Work
- Jiri Stelzer – Professor, Kinesiology and Physical Education
- Vesta Whisler – Associate Professor, Adult and Career Education
- Changwoo Yang – Associate Professor, Library & Information Science

In addition to the voting member, the following non-voting members provided highly valuable contributions to the committee as well:

- Xavier Cheevers – VSU Division of Information Technology
- Sterlin Sanders – VSU Division of Information Technology
- Amanda King-Spezzo – VSU Center for eLearning
- Kathy Sundin – VSU Center for eLearning

About the Plan

In January 2014, the Dean's office charged the committee with establishing a strategic plan capable of guiding the COEHS's technology adoption and utilization for the coming years. Through its membership, the COEHS Technology Committee provides a voice to each of the stakeholder groups within the College. In May 2014, an initial technology plan was submitted to Dean Brian Gerber. The initial plan defined a technology vision for the College, strategic themes for realizing the vision, and specific recommendations for initiatives addressing needs within the College. In April of 2015, it was determined that this report would become an annual responsibility of the COEHS Technology committee. Therefore, this report updates the progress regarding these recommendations and defines additional recommendations to be considered as the College enters the 2016-17 academic year.

College Vision for Technology

The College's technology vision is defined as:

The COEHS seeks to continuously use leading technologies and practices to support the production of technology-forward graduates, innovative teaching and research, and efficient services.

This vision serves as the driving force for encouraging, adopting, and sustaining technology-related endeavors within the College. To realize this vision, the College must undertake a series of strategic initiatives, defined below, geared towards building, enhancing, and sustaining technology-supported learning, research, and service.

Strategic Themes Underlying Vision

To realize its technology vision, the College of Education and Human Services will systematically implement and sustain strategic initiatives addressing multiple themes integral to the College’s operation and on-going success. Each of these themes is identified below, along with a description of the activities encompassed in that thematic area.

Student Learning	Endeavors that include but are not limited to: (i) increasing students’ access to knowledge and instructional content in both traditional and online courses, (ii) developing students’ technology-related skills necessary to support their learning at VSU and prepare them as educators in the nation’s schools and professional settings, and (iii) increasing students’ development and participation in learning communities ranging from course-level teams to professional societies.
Professional Development	Endeavors that include but are not limited to: (i) increasing faculty and staff skill levels to promote the use and quality of technology-supported teaching and services, (ii) advancing research agendas utilizing emerging and leading-edge technologies, and (iii) increasing technology diffusion and adoption rates by faculty and staff.
Infrastructure	Endeavors that include but are not limited to: (i) upgrading the quality and capacity of COEHS-funded equipment and infrastructure, e.g., computers and printers in teaching labs, (ii) advocating and coordinating the upgrading of the range, speed, and capacity of VSU-funded equipment and infrastructure utilized at COEHS locations, and (iii) increasing access to, and variety of, software commonly used by faculty, staff, and students.
Process Efficiency	Endeavors that include but are not limited to: (i) increasing access to, and efficiency of, student services through the use of technology, e.g., online application process, student advising, (ii) increasing access to, and efficiency of, faculty and staff services, e.g., travel, mid-tenure and post-tenure reviews, and (iii) increasing and ensuring consistently high quality levels in technology-supported activities.
Capacity (Sustainability)	Endeavors that include but are not limited to: (i) assigning budgetary commitments to technology acquisitions, (ii) executing strategic and tactical planning targeting technology, and (iii) nurturing a culture of technology-infused teaching, learning, and service.

Goals for Strategic Themes

Each of the strategic themes is driven by a series of goals to be achieved in the coming years by the College. Collectively, the achievement of these goals will build a stronger technology foundation for the College and advance the COEHS towards its ultimate technology vision.

Theme: Student Learning

- Goal SL1: Produce graduates capable of effectively utilizing industry-standard technology in the workplace
- Goal SL2: Increase students' access to learning content (e.g., support multiple platforms ~ desktop, mobile, increase the number of online and/or hybrid courses, etc.)
- Goal SL3: Utilize technology to better enable students to collaborate and build learning and service communities

Theme: Professional Development

- Goal PD1: Promote innovation in research and teaching through the use of emerging technologies
- Goal PD2: Increase the level of technology infused into current classroom instruction
- Goal PD3: Institutionalize a technology-focused training program to increase faculty and staff usage and skill levels

Theme: Infrastructure

- Goal I1: Update and maintain current hardware throughout the College, especially in teaching labs, and technology-enhanced classrooms
- Goal I2: Coordinate networking, hardware, and infrastructure upgrades with campus IT services to ensure stable, high speed, and easy to use infrastructure services are available throughout the College's locations around campus
- Goal I3: Increase the availability and variety of software accessible for faculty, staff, and students to use

Theme: Process Efficiencies

- Goal PE1: Establish guidelines for ensuring high quality, pedagogically sound instruction is utilized in COEHS online courses
- Goal PE2: Collaborate with partnering groups (e.g., campus IT) to develop efficient, online procedures for key student and faculty/staff services (e.g., student application process, student advising, faculty travel, etc.)

Theme: Capacity (Sustainability)

- Goal C1: Demonstrate financial commitment to the on-going improvement of technology usage
- Goal C2: Annually evaluate the College's progress on its technology plan and the suitability of the plan's goals and priorities in the face of emerging technologies in the years to come
- Goal C3: Promote a culture prioritizing and infusing technology throughout learning, scholarship, and service endeavors

The realization of these goals is advocated through annual recommendations to be made to the Dean each academic year. These recommendations are intended to aid the Dean in strategic and budgetary planning of technology for the upcoming academic year with the ultimate purpose of fulfilling these strategic goals.

2015 Recommendations & Updates

As part of the 2015 Technology Plan, the following recommendations are submitted for the Dean's consideration for the academic year 2016-17. Each of the recommendations is tied to one or more of the strategic themes. It is the belief of the Technology Committee that these recommendations are vital to the College's continuous improvement. For each recommendation, the action item and rationale are provided in their original form, as they appeared in the previous version of the COEHS technology report. After each rationale, a 'progress update' statement is provided regarding the completion or on-going status of that recommended action item.

Action Item #15-1:	Begin updating/replacing computers and printers in COEHS teaching labs
Strategic Goal:	I1: Update and maintain current hardware throughout the College, especially in teaching labs, and technology-enhanced classrooms
Responsible Party:	Dean's Office
Timeline:	Initiated: Fall 2014 and on-going thereafter

Rationale for need:

In order to achieve several of the College's strategic goals (e.g., SL1, PD2) the current equipment in the College must continue to be updated and improved. There are currently 4 labs that are outdated and should be updated. Those labs in rooms 2022 of the SLP building, 1103 and 1140 of the Education Center, and 2007 of the Psychology building have not been upgraded within four years. Fulfillment of this recommendation continues to remain a top priority given the fact that other strategic goals rely on its completion. Once these labs have been updated, all COEHS computer labs will be compliant with the recommendation that all labs consist of machines that are no more than three years of age or less.

Progress update:

Much progress has been made in this area. In 2015, at least 81 computers were updated within the COEHS Education Center. In future years, progress in this area should be monitored to further lower the age of all machines to three years or less. Doing so ensures that all machines are capable of efficiently running today's industry-standard software. Prior to the college's first technology plan, many of the computers in the classrooms and labs were more than 5 years old and had difficulty running standard software applications

Action Item #15-2:	Increase capacity and range of wireless networks in COEHS locations
Strategic Goal:	I2: Coordinate networking, hardware, and infrastructure upgrades with campus IT services to ensure stable, high speed, and easy to use infrastructure services are available throughout the College's locations around campus
Responsible Party:	Campus Information Technology Office & Dean's Office
Timeline:	Initiated in Summer 2014; to be completed in 2016

Rationale for need:

While the Technology Committee realizes that infrastructure elements, such as the wireless network, are beyond the sole control of the COEHS administration, the Committee also wishes to emphasize the need for the Dean's Office to advocate for greater infrastructure investments directed at COEHS locations by campus technology administrators. Students and faculty, alike, repeatedly cited insufficient wireless access and capacity as one of the major needs of the College. In addition, as with the previous

recommendation, multiple strategic goals (e.g., SL2, PD1, PD2) rely on the College having better infrastructure components to achieve those long term goals. As a result, this recommendation is the top priority with regard to acquiring additional resources from campus IT.

Progress update:

Much progress has been made in this area as well. During the 2015-16 school year, the wired network infrastructure in all COEHS academic spaces was upgraded from 1 gb to 10 gb which created a marked improvement in the utilization of campus academic resources over the wired network. As a result, files can now be accessed more quickly, internet access has improved, and video conferencing capabilities have been improved as well. Safeguarding features were installed as well, in order to better adapt to potential network failures.

In addition, the wireless network was upgraded in all academic spaces across the entire campus. Data access points were increased by 150%. This significant increase in quantity and quality improved the range, accessibility, coverage, and authentication process.

Action Item #15-3:	Establish a multi-level training program to incentivize faculty and staff to increase their technology utilization levels
Strategic Goal:	PD3: Institutionalize a technology-focused training program to increase faculty and staff usage and skill levels
Responsible Party:	COEHS Tech Committee, COEHS Professional Develop. Committee, Dean’s Office
Timeline:	2015-2016

Rationale for need:

The need for professional development has been evidenced by recurring statements from faculty and students that faculty sometimes are not aware of emerging technologies and/or do not have the training to use established technologies efficiently. Given that campus IT and eLearning centers already offer a variety of traditional training sessions, the Committee continues to recommend the establishment of an alternative training program designed to encourage faculty to develop their own skill levels and train others to use and enhance their skills as well. The eventual attainment of strategic goals SL1, SL2, PD1, PD2, and C3 all rely upon having faculty and staff that are better trained and exhibit higher levels of technology utilization.

Furthermore, the recent results of the CAEP review indicated that “technology integration into instruction” was listed as an area of improvement for the College. Discussions at a recent RESA meeting of K-12 technology coordinators also stressed the importance that COEHS graduates be capable of utilizing the following technological advances and/or skills: Google apps, Office 365, Google Classroom, interactive whiteboards, handheld device integration, and be able to utilize technological collaboration between students, parents, and other professionals.

Progress update:

Faculty continue to have access to a wide variety of technologically related professional development opportunities from various entities within the university system such as the Center for e-Learning, the Employee and Organization Development Department, the Media Center, The IDEA Center, Atomic Learning, as well as various asynchronous workshops which are available through the USG, GoVIEW, BlazeVIEW, etc.. The Employee and Organization Development office maintains a single warehouse for searching and registering from the various workshops that are being offered by these multiple different entities. The EOD has recently added an online resource known as SkillPort, which offers learning plans

and development focused upon e-Learning and technology related issues. In order to address the necessity for a more centralized mechanism by which professional development can be sought and received, Rebecca Murphy, Associate Director of Human Resources for Employee Development, has agreed to serve as the coordinating entity for professional development needs. She has expressed a willingness to tailor specific professional development needs to individuals and departments. This is an opportunity for COEHS faculty and staff to develop targeted specific skills related to their discipline which can improve the quality of education that is provided to our future teaching force.

The COEHS Technology Committee has determined that it will provide the most benefit to the COEHS in this area going forward by serving as the conduit for technological purchase requests. The committee's role will be to solicit, receive, and evaluate technological purchase requests before passing recommendations along to the Dean of the COEHS.

Action Item #15-4:	Increase the number of online courses
Strategic Goal:	SL2: Increase students' access to learning content
Responsible Party:	Dean's Office, coordinated with Department Chairs
Timeline:	Begin in 2015

Rationale for need:

The 2014 Technology Needs survey revealed students' top concerns focused on updating and improving the College's technology infrastructure. The next area of concern for students was the number of available online courses. Given the ever increasing rate of competition from other higher education institutions, COEHS needs to establish a plan for effectively increasing its online presence, both to increase access to courses for existing students and to recruit future students into on-campus and online degree programs. In addition, the increased revenues from these additional online courses and programs could be used to support current and future technology initiatives within the College.

Progress update:

The table below represents only courses that have actually enrolled students. Progress has been steady in terms of adding additional fully online courses, although there has been a precipitous drop in hybrid courses. ACED accounts for a large percentage of undergraduate online offerings while CLT accounts for a large percentage of graduate online offerings. Other units are continuing to develop their online presence. The B.S. degree in Psychology will be offered online in the Fall of 2016 and an initiative within the COEHS remains to increase these numbers.

	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Summer 2014	Summer 2015	Summer 2016
Fully Online/Entirely at a Distance COEHS Courses	177	214	233	174	225	261	171	182	4
Hybrid COEHS Courses	28	37	28	32	32	22	9	17	9

Source: Barrie Fitzgerald, 3-31-2016

Action Item #15-5:	Promote the adoption of quality-control standards for online courses
Strategic Goal:	PE1: Establish guidelines for ensuring high quality, pedagogically sound instruction is utilized in COEHS online courses
Responsible Party:	VSU's Center for eLearning; Dean's Office
Timeline:	Begin in Fall 2015 and on-going thereafter

Rationale for need:

Designing courses for online delivery is a complex endeavor requiring knowledge of the content domain, sound online pedagogical practices, and the affordances of available technologies. In their survey responses, students and faculty alike called for the use of “leading practices” and “best practices” by faculty in their instruction. Established quality control procedures would ensure baseline quality standards are met and provide additional guidance to faculty in improving the overall quality of their courses. VSU's Center for eLearning already supports the Quality Matters protocols of quality control. These standards could be combined with domain-specific feedback to address both structural quality (through Quality Matters) and pedagogical quality through domain-specific feedback.

Progress update:

Progress in this area continues to be slow. However, the University is currently engaged in an initiative via the UPCEA to investigate the mechanism by which online courses and programs can be assessed.

2016 Recommendations to the Dean

The 2016 recommendations to the Dean introduce new topics as well as re-prioritize several existing 2015 recommendations. They reflect the committee's priorities and values regarding technology usage in the College and many of them directly impact CAEP's stated demands for continuous improvement in the use of technologies within our course offerings.

Action Item #16-1:	Advocate greater integration of technology into on-campus courses.
Strategic Goal:	PD2: Increase the level of technology infused into current classroom instruction
Responsible Party:	Dean's Office, COEHS Tech Committee, & VSU professional development providers
Timeline:	Summer 2016

Rationale for need:

As part of the stakeholder surveying completed for the 2014 Technology Plan, students repeatedly stated their desire for greater technology integration in the classroom. A coordinated effort needs to be established between the Dean's Office and VSU's professional development providers (e.g., Center for eLearning) to articulate and deliver a training program (i.e., a series of purposefully sequenced workshops) targeting classroom technology integration. The Employee and Organization Development department should be utilized to coordinate specific and targeted professional development for faculty and staff of the COEHS. This will begin to address the Area for Improvement established by CAEP and echoed by several local education agencies. This program should be promoted to College faculty at the August COEHS faculty meeting and subsequently by department leaders to encourage widespread adoption by faculty.

In addition, the COEHS Technology Committee should be utilized as a means by which technological funding requests can be initiated. This committee has developed a means by which to evaluate requests and is prepared to fulfill this role.

Action Item #16-2:	Formalize an initiative to increase the number of online courses
Strategic Goal:	SL2: Increase students' access to learning content
Responsible Party:	Dean's Office, coordinated with Department Chairs
Timeline:	Begin in 2015

Rationale for need:

As with recommendation #16-1, above, students repeatedly have stated their desire for more online courses. The 2014 Technology Plan called for the creation of a formal initiative to increase its online instructional presence, both to increase access to online instruction for on-campus students as well as establishing new 100%-online degree programs. A few units have begun planning for more online courses/programs on their own but a coordinated initiative needs to be established to ensure sustained effort and growth continue in this vital area of the College's future.

Action Item#16-3:	Champion the adoption of quality-control standards for online courses
Strategic Goal:	PE1: Establish guidelines for ensuring high quality, pedagogically sound instruction is utilized in COEHS online courses
Responsible Party:	Dean's Office, coordinated with VSU's Center for eLearning
Timeline:	Begin in Fall 2015 and on-going thereafter

Rationale for need:

The 2014 report called for increased usage of quality-control standards in online courses but left implementation to individual instructors and programs. In 2016, the need and priority for this effort is heightened. Ever increasing competition from inside and outside of Georgia is forcing VSU to introduce initiatives to remain competitive. The utilization of Quality Matters and other quality control standards (e.g., ISTE NETS-T) should not be considered a design option but a necessity incorporated into every online/hybrid course offered with the COEHS.

Summary

The 2015-2016 academic year witnessed several valuable advancements by the College with regard to its technology vision and goals. The average age of the equipment in the computer labs continues to decline; the network infrastructure within the Education Center was significantly upgraded; a process by which faculty can request funds to be devoted toward technological purchases has been developed, and the number of online courses increased markedly over last year. Still, the COEHS should continue to seek innovative manners in which technologically bolstered teaching methods can improve the quality of education that its students receive. Results from the 2015 CAEP review indicate this to be an accurate assessment. If implemented, the recommendations by this committee will serve the COEHS well in beginning to address many of the technologically based issues which affect the College and its students.