*Valdosta State University*
*College of Education & Human Services*

**COEHS Technology Plan**

**April 2015**

## Committee Membership

The 2014-15 College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) Technology Committee was comprised of the following voting members:

- Natalie Ajamian – Undergraduate Student Representative
- Jennifer Beal-Alvarez – Assistant Professor, Middle Grades, Secondary, Reading, & Deaf Education
- Blaine Browne – Associate Professor, Psychology and Counseling
- Matthew Carter – Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Taylor Davidson – Graduate Student Representative
- Steve Downey, Committee Chair – Associate Professor, Curriculum, Leadership, & Technology
- Kelly Heckaman – Associate Professor, Early Childhood and Special Education
- Lana Kim – Assistant Professor, Marriage and Family Therapy
- Michael Sanger – Professor, Social Work
- Anthony Scheffler – Associate Dean, COEHS Dean's Office
- Jiri Stelzer – Professor, Kinesiology and Physical Education
- Kate Warner – Professor, Marriage and Family Therapy
- 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 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. This report updates the progress regarding these recommendations and defines additional recommendations to be considered as the College enters the 2015-16 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. Some goals may be achieved in a single year, while others will require continual commitment. 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 courses, etc.)
Goal SL3:   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 (e.g., Citrix software farm)

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 during the month of March of 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.

As part of the 2014 Technology Plan, the following recommendations are submitted for the Dean's consideration for the academic year 2014-15.  Each of the recommendations is tied to one or more of the strategic themes.  Prioritization of these recommendations is based in large part upon faculty, staff, and student responses to the spring 2014 technology surveys.  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 2014 report.  After each rationale, a 'progress update' statement is provided regarding the completion or on-going status of that recommended action item.

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|---|---|
| Action Item #14-1: | 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: | 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 be updated and improved.  This process should begin in the teaching labs with those labs housing the oldest equipment updated first.  At least one lab (two if possible) should be updated during the 2014-15 academic year.  Each year one or more additional labs should be updated so that no teaching facilities use hardware more than three years old (see goal C1).  Fulfillment of this recommendation is a top priority given the fact that other strategic goals rely on its completion.

Progress update:
Four COEHS labs comprising 86 machines along with four machines in the COEHS Lobby are scheduled for replacement, see appendix.  The cost of replacing these machines is $132,000.  Replacing these machines ensures that there all lab machines are four years or less in age.  In future years, progress in this area should be continued 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.

| | |
|---|---|
| Action Item #14-2: | 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: | Begin in Summer 2014 ; complete 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 wish 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, see page nine.  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:
In December 2014, the wired network within the Education Center was upgraded to a 10GB platform to address increasing bandwidth demands.  During the March 2015 meeting, VSU's Assistant Director of Infrastructure, Ike Barton, presented an overview of the system upgrade.  He also provided a copy of the VSU infrastructure upgrade schedule, see appendix.  This schedule shows the upgrades projected for other COEHS locations around campus.  Upgrades in the wireless network are pending, as upgrades must be made to the wireless infrastructure within the VSU dorms before other locations around campus can be addressed.

| Action Item #14-3: | Establish budgetary line items to designate annual allocations to support the continual upgrading of infrastructure and technology-oriented professional development |
| --- | --- |
| Strategic Goal: | C1:  Demonstrate financial commitment to the on-going improvement of technology usage |
| Responsible Party: | Dean's Office |
| Timeline: | Beginning in 2015 and on-going thereafter |

Rationale for need:
The financial turmoil incurred by VSU and the COEHS in recent years has challenged administrators to prioritize and balance a multiplicity of needs, including technology.  Given the critical role that technology plans in the College's long term success, the Technology Committee highly recommends the establishment of budgetary line items specifically addressing recurring annual expenditures for technology, e.g., recommendation #1: updating teaching lab equipment.  Without allocations specifically earmarked for technological improvement, the College jeopardizes the attainment of its strategic goals and the College's long term technology vision.

Progress update:
A technology budget fund exists within the College.  Its size is relatively small, approximately $30,000.  Dean Gerber has requested an increase to the fund to compensate for the additions of new units to the College, e.g., Library, Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy.  Dean Gerber also is requesting that the funds be allowed to rollover from one fiscal year to another in order to provide greater flexibility in spending and accommodate larger purchase items.  The process to request use of the funds for individual faculty or departments needs greater structure and transparency; this aspect of the action item is being carried forward to the 2015 report, see Action Item #15-4.

| Action Item #14-4: | 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 is evidenced by recurring statements by faculty and students that faculty sometimes aren't 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 recommends 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.

Progress update:

The committee focused a great deal of attention on this action item during its fall 2014 meetings.  At the January 2015 meeting, two approaches were reviewed:  (i) individualized framework and (ii) continuous improvement platform.  The individual framework would track each faculty/staff member's self-reported needs and progress, and, in turn, provide aggregate information to department heads and on-campus professional development providers, see appendix.  The continuous improvement platform draws upon system being developed in related to the on-going CAEP accreditation review to infer professional development needs of faculty, based upon assessment scores reported in the continuous improvement reporting system, see appendix.

Given the lack of clear specifications from the CAEP accreditation agency, neither approach was readily identifiable as the best long term solution for the College.  Future discussions were tabled until after the CAEP visit in April 2015, whereupon additional requirements can be attained from CAEP.


| Action Item #14-5: | 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 stated repeatedly in their open-ended responses as well as in their priority-ranking survey responses, 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:

Year to year comparisons show strong increases in the number of fully only courses for the fall and spring semesters, see table below.  Summer online course offers were relatively flat, year to year. Hybrid courses were proportionally smaller in the number offered and the growth for these types of courses was mixed – i.e., fall offerings increase, spring offerings decreased, and the summer was relatively flat.  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.

| | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Spring 2014 | Spring 2015 | Summer 2014 | Summer 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fully Online COEHS Courses | 487 | 598 | 515 | 641 | 402 | 400 |
| Hybrid COEHS Courses | 134 | 154 | 173 | 135 | 34 | 29 |

Source:  Center for eLearning, March 2015

| Action Item #14-6: | 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 |
| 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 has been extremely slow.  To date, only two COEHS courses are QM certified EDET 8010 (Anthony Pellegrino) and LEAD 7830 (James Archibald).  Of these, EDET 8010's design may no longer be in use as the instructor has left VSU.  In January 2015, Curriculum, Leadership, & Technology began an initiative to refocus its M.Ed. in Instructional Technology program.  As part of this effort, all of the required courses within the M.Ed. program will undergo the Quality Matters certification process and the entire program will employ a comprehensive evaluation model utilizing more than 25 metrics for monitoring quality.  That being said, a broader college-wide initiative needs to be undertaken.

| Action Item #14-7: | Formalize procedures and time lines for evaluating the College's technology progress and make recommendations to the Dean to promote the realization of the College's long term vision |
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| Strategic 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 |
| Responsible Party: | COEHS Technology Committee |
| Timeline: | 2014-2015 |

Rationale for need:
Given technology's ever-changing nature, new affordances, practices, and platforms are constantly emerging.  As a result, the initial vision, goals, and recommendations put forth in this document must be regularly updated to reflect to the College's progress, new opportunities, and continuing challenges.  It

is the Technology Committee's on-going task to ensure that the College's technology capacity is continuously monitored and that recommendations for improvements are submitted to the Dean for consideration and eventual deployment.

Progress update:
The committee agreed that the production of an annual COEHS technology plan would be part of the review process.  As part of the drafting of this document, the progress on each action item was assessed by the committee, including the revaluing of the action item itself.  The committee discussed whether the item should be continued or discontinued as a result of either completion or re-prioritization.  If the action item was to be continued to the next year, the item's particulars (i.e., wording of the strategic goal, responsible party, and timeline) were reassessed.  If deemed appropriate, they were accepted and continued on to the following year.  If deemed inappropriate and/or sufficiently low in priority, the floor was open to discussion until agreement was reached.  Once the document was agreed upon by the committee, it was posted to the committee's website.

It was also recommended that every three years the committee repeat its surveying of College stakeholders, as it did for the 2014 plan.  The three year time span ensures a balance between survey workload demands and changing technology needs; it also corresponds with the three year timeframe recommended by the Georgia Department of Education's guidelines for technology planning.

## 2015 Recommendations to the Dean

The 2015 recommendations to the Dean introduce new topics as well as re-prioritize several existing 2014 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 #15-1: | 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 & VSU professional development providers |
| Timeline: | Begin Summer 2015 |

Rationale for need:
As part of the stakeholder surveying done 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.  Once articulated, 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.

| Action Item #15-2: | Formalize an initiative to increase the number of online courses (see item #14-5) |
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| 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 #15-1, 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#15-3: | Champion the adoption of quality-control standards for online courses (#14-6) |
|---|---|
| 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 (see Action Item #14-6). In 2015, 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.

| Action Item#15-4: | Formalize the process for requesting COEHS technology funds from the Dean's Office (#14-3) |
|---|---|
| Strategic Goal: | C1: Demonstrate financial commitment to the on-going improvement of technology usage |
| Responsible Party: | Dean's Office |
| Timeline: | Complete during 2015-2016 |

Rationale for need:
Most faculty are unaware of the existence of the COEHS technology fund or how to request funds for use with individual or departmental technology endeavors. A formal process for announcing, requesting, and approving COEHS technology funds needs to be established to ensure equal opportunities for all faculty to pursue technology endeavors. Doing so facilitates professional growth and innovation within the College.

| Action Item#15-5: | Explore the possibility for the creation of a Director of Technology position |
| --- | --- |
| Strategic Goal: | All |
| Responsible Party: | Dean's Office |
| Timeline: | 2015 |

Rationale for need:
Students, faculty, staff, and accreditation agencies alike recognize that effective, ubiquitous use of technology is vital to the College's long term growth and competitiveness. Given the time and work demands necessary to ensure success in this area, consideration must be given the creation of a fulltime director position dedicated to promoting, facilitating, and evaluating the use of technology within the College. Without a key administrator to spearhead college-wide efforts, most initiatives will stall and eventually fail. A 'champion' needs to be designated and empowered to afford the College its greatest opportunity for technological success. Bearing this in mind, an initial outline of job requirements for the proposed position are provided in the appendix to aid in the creation of this administrative position.

## *Summary*

The 2014-2015 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; and, the number of online courses increased markedly over last year. Still, challenges of varying sizes remain. Quality assurance procedures for online courses are not advocated; technology integration in face-to-face classes remains largely a trial and error proposition; and, there isn't a technology 'champion' to lead college-wide initiatives and promote the achievement of the College's overall technology vision.

The recommendations for the 2015-16 academic year address the largest of these challenges. Advancement on these items and continued progress on the 2014-15 recommendations should result in significant and long lasting strides towards a culture of technology-forward continuous innovation in teaching, learning, research, and service.

In closing, I wish to thank each of the COEHS Technology Committee members for their time and dedication to the committee's work and mission. Meaningful progress was made during the 2014-2015 academic year and even greater strides can be made in the future, based upon the work done this year. I, the College, and its stakeholders are indebted to you.
- Steve Downey, Chairperson, COEHS Technology Committee

**Because information in the report's appendices contains data affecting VSU's network security, the appendices are not included in the Web version of this document.**

To request access to appendix data and information, please contact the 2014-15 COEHS Technology Committee chairperson, Dr. Steve Downey at [sedowney@valdosta.edu](mailto:sedowney@valdosta.edu).

If you're a COEHS faculty, staff, or student, you may contact your department's representative and view his/her copy of the report, see membership list on page 1 of the report.