

Information Technology

Operating and Equipment Budget Review Summary 2004 – 2005

The office of Information Technology has a number of significant projects scheduled for 2004-2005. This document reviews those projects and their impact on the fiscal 2004-2005 operating and equipment budgets. We also present an overview of future risks and opportunities.

Major Planned Projects

Campus network upgrade

We are using fiscal 2003-2004 funding to completing the majority of the final phase of the campus network upgrade plan. We request funding to finish the remaining Greek Houses in 2004-2005. The University approved \$250,000 for this project in 2003-2004; however, by using “like to new” equipment we expect this cost to be less than \$210,000.

SCT Luminis Premier project

The University has contracted with Sungard SCT for the Luminis Premier portal and content management system. Lou Ann Fillingham has agreed to create a new cost center to better manage the operating costs attributable to this project. We present detailed costs for this project. In addition, it appears we underestimated our server cost. This project may require as much as \$30,000 for servers instead of the \$20,000 originally projected.

ID number and card changes

We are moving ahead with plans to move away from using Social Security Number as the person ID number in Banner. We are also preparing for creating new ID cards for the campus community this summer. This will require an increase in the funds used for card stock. We also need to determine a few other ID card and security related policies and procedures.

Single Sign On

Along with the ID number and card changes we continue to work on solutions to improve system authentication. We will require system log-in for computers in Buck and Ames this fall. We plan to use operating funds for a software consultant to help simplify access to personal file space on the Sun server. We also would use a system log-in to identify students should we implement a pay-for-print solution. We include an estimate for a pay-for-print solution.

IT equipment requests

We include a summary of equipment requested for IT staff and facilities.

Risks and opportunities

Telecommunications: switch, dial-in, operating budget

On April 20, the University experienced a major failure of its telephone switch. We lost phone service to most of the University for most of the day. While we are covered by a maintenance agreement, our telephone switch is 15 years old, and repair parts can be hard to find. We need to consider upgrading or replacing the switch. Verizon recommends that we replace the two oldest electronics cabinets used by the switch and also upgrade our voicemail system. They are offering an upgrade for \$236,000 if we act before June 30th. They would also like to discuss how they could save the University money on our long distance and Internet connection.

The University should consider using Geoff Tritsch from Compass Consulting to help evaluate this decision. We used Compass Consulting back in 1999 to review our long distance rates. We believe that Compass Consulting's services would help us evaluate our current switch and its role in future converged network services. A proposal from Compass Consulting is included.

In addition to the telephone switch, the University needs to review two items in the operating budget. The first is for dial-in access to the network. The T1 line to support this service now cost \$20,000 per year. Use of this service has declined. We recommend that the University consider discontinuing this service. In addition, IT has oversight of the 905100 telecommunications expense cost center. We request authorization to review the telecom income cost center as well.

Access systems

The University has been examining its present strategy for providing access to buildings. One strategy we may want to consider is using the campus ID card and card readers permit access to building. The University's existing ID card system has software to track card access and authorizations. However, the amount of work required to implement and maintain such a system would be beyond the current capabilities of our existing staff. IT is reviewing existing responsibilities for card services and new tasks required to maintain card access to buildings.

Life Cycle planning

We continue to be concerned about developing Life Cycle plans for server and computer workstation replacement. Some have called this a "reserve for renewal" for computers. As in the past, we present our recommended lifecycle plans for the University's servers.

Digital Media Services

IT has begun discussions with the Ames Library about the increasing impact of digital media services on library and IT staff workloads. These discussions include thinking about how our departments can better collaborate to improve service. One development that bears watching is a recent RFP issued by the University's Illinet library consortium. One of the products the consortium is considering is a Digital Asset Management system (DAM). Implementing such a system would not only require hardware and software, but a reconfiguration of support services to make best use of this software's capabilities. We are particularly interested in such a system because it has the potential to address many of the digital media services requested by faculty.

Network security improvements

Finally, we need to continue to be vigilant with network security. The increasing volume of Spam, viruses, and spyware continue to cause concern about our ability to keep pace with malicious software attacks. Some institutions now require that students register their computers before they can use the network. Some even require that students run software that enforces anti-virus policies. We plan to continue our investigations of ways to best secure the campus wired and wireless networks.