Technology Services

Annual Report for 2014

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Executive Summary

Technology is the heart beat of Monroe Community College. Our students now apply online, register for classes, pay tuition bills, and obtain their grades from our administrative system, Banner. Our mail system facilitates communication between students and instructors. Our network systems allow students to navigate the internet for classwork as well as Blackboard to actually attend classes or post class work for the instructors. Our telephones also rely on the network infrastructure to allow students to communicate with our staff. The extensive wireless system allows our users to access the network from anywhere with any device to facilitate learning. Our classrooms provide the needed technology allowing a student to sit down in a lab and use the software required for the class.

Technology Services has had quite a year. 2014 saw the retirement of the Chief Technology Officer and the restructure of a division. Both events had an impact on the department. The appointment of the Interim Associate VP turned into the CIO as the division was dissolved. 2014 also brought about changes in how Technology Services provides solutions to the college. A new Business Analyst was brought on board to better understand the issues that our users face and to provide solutions to address and streamline our business practices.

The Technology Services area has grown stronger as a result of the changes and will continue to refine and address the college’s needs. We will continue to evolve and provide the needed support to continue the excellent support that has been expected of the Technology Services staff.

David J. Lane
Interim Associate Vice President
Chief Information Officer
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Computing & Information Technology Services

Improved Banner Response Time

Old network load balancers were replaced with new network load balancers. This has resulted in an 80% improvement in the average response time for Banner Self Service.

Preparation for Banner XE

The college is currently using Banner release 8 to run most of the college’s administrative applications. Conversion work was completed in the past year to prepare for Banner XE, the latest release of Banner. Banner XE will provide a redesigned user interface as well as new features and functionality. Banner XE will be released in phases over the next couple of years. You can expect to see the first components of the Banner Student module in 2015.

New Degree Audit system

Degree Works is a SUNY System initiative that will facilitate course transfer between SUNY campuses. This system supports the completion initiative and facilitates student mobility from SUNY Campus to SUNY campus. Planning, implementation, and testing for this new degree audit system have been ongoing since 2012. Computing & Information Technology Services has provided the technical support and programming for this SUNY initiative. Go-live for the new degree audit system is scheduled for March 2015.

New Enrollment Management system to aid student recruitment efforts

Recruiter, a new enrollment management system was implemented for the college. Recruiter provides a personalized web presence for prospective students and allows the college to build relationships with those who may have an interest in attending the college. The system provides configurable online applications for admissions, powerful marketing communications tools, event management, reporting and analytics, and integration with the Banner Admissions system.

New Program Change system for Students

In conjunction with the Advising and Graduation department, a new system was developed to improve the process for students requesting a change in program. Prior to the new system, students had to visit the Advising & Graduation Services department to obtain and fill out a hardcopy request form. Program change requests that were approved were then manually updated in Banner. The new system provides an electronic request form that can be submitted through Self Service Banner. The requests are analyzed by the system and either the program is updated automatically in Banner or it is routed to either Advising and Graduation Services or the Career and Transfer Center for review. At the conclusion of the process, an email is sent to the student notifying them with the result of their request. In addition to providing improved customer service for our students, the new system has eliminated the need to manually update Banner with program changes.
New Mobile App

In May 2014, the college launched its first mobile app for Android and iOS devices. The app provides course schedules, grades, class cancellations, news, maps and more.

New Housing Management System

In conjunction with the Residence Life department a new housing management system was implemented. The new system manages applications for housing, room assignments, wait lists and interfaces with Banner for billing and up to date student information.

New Leave Request System

Computing & Information Technology Services developed a system to manage requests for leave (vacation, personal, sick, etc.) for college departments. The system provides a department calendar with scheduled leave viewable by the entire department. The system enables employees to submit leave requests to their supervisor with a customized approval workflow to meet the needs of each department. Currently, over 40 departments at the college are using the new system.

Frequently Asked Questions  (Ask MCC)

A new application called “Ask MCC” was implemented to serve as a “one stop shop” for students and prospective students who may have questions about the college and its services. Questions are entered into the system and potential answers are returned. If someone cannot find an online answer, a question can be submitted and triaged to the appropriate department for an answer. The application is accessible on the myMCC login page as well as most student service department web pages.

Online System to Hire Part Time Employees

In conjunction with Payroll and Human Resources an online system was developed to eliminate paper in the hiring process for part time employees. Accessible through myMCC, designated individuals can submit an electronic form to initiate the hiring process. The request is guided through an approval process and in the final step; Banner is updated with a new job assignment. This system has expedited the hiring process by creating a completely electronic process, with workflow approvals, email alerts and minimizing data entry in Banner.

Angel to Blackboard Migration

Working with Instructional Technologies, we designed and implemented a migration strategy for moving existing and new online courses from the Angel learning management system to the Blackboard system. This involved moving account, course, and enrollment data as well as course content from Banner to Blackboard.
Dual Enrollment Upgrades

New functionality and enhancements were added to the web based system used by MCC to enroll high school students in courses taught for college credit at their high schools.

WordPress

Work was done to set up a new web publishing platform at MCC utilizing WordPress. Sites were created for EDWIS in support of Workforce Forward, and for the 292-Baby grant project.

Web Redesign

New web site information architecture was developed working with Noel Levitz and a new design for www.monroecc.edu was begun with Crowley Webb, the marketing firm that developed MCC’s current branding.

Phase 3 WWW Redesign

Existing department web sites were converted to the design developed by Martino and Flynn and were made more consistent. The sites were also prepared for migration to the new web content management system.

Web Content Management System

A new Web Content Management System (WCMS) was selected for MCC named Typo3. This new system will allow the editing and publishing of www.monroecc.edu content using only a web browser, and will provide users with workflows to move new content to the live website themselves. New servers were created, Typo3 was installed, and all back end configuration was done in preparation for moving MCC web content to the new system this year.

Student Storage Migration/U: Drive Rollout

The Student Storage system (S: Drive for students) was migrated from older servers using MCC’s previous Storage Area Network (SAN) NetApps disk array to new servers utilizing the new EMC Storage Array. Student Storage provides students with access to their own S: drive at any PC on campus, and via the web from off campus. The same capability was rolled out to employees with the U: drive, which is now mapped to each employee’s directory from M:\Users previously.
**Employee Account Provisioning**

Further enhancements were added to the process of automatically creating and maintaining MCC Employee Network Accounts. A new look and feel was added to the web applications used to manage Network Accounts at MCC: account.monroecc.edu. New functionality was added for streamlining the process of activating accounts, and for indicating the strength and acceptability of new passwords.

**Program Learning Outcomes and Gainful Employment Information for the College Catalog**

Work was done with the Curriculum office to add program learning outcomes to existing program descriptions. Federal Gainful Employment data was added to existing certificate programs as well.

**Search Engine Optimization Project Begun**

Search Engine Optimization web page content and metadata were provided by Noel Levitz to MCC. This content was turned into new web pages and the metadata was added to existing program data in the Curriculum database. This will be an ongoing project until the nearly 100 program pages have been created with the appropriate searchable metadata.

**Statistics**

Nearly 2,000 requests from the college community were completed by Computing & Information Technology Services in 2014.
Communications & Network Services

Software Updates
Ongoing maintenance is a critical part of what Technology Service does on a daily basis. Servers and systems on campus require regular patching, but major updates need planning and coordination to implement new features for users. The following systems have undergone major updates and upgrades this past year.

1. Upgraded Microsoft Exchange 2010 to Microsoft Exchange 2013 messaging environment, including active Database Availability Groups (DAG) at PSTF
2. Upgrade virtualization environment to ESXi 5.5
3. Implemented new Server 2012 R2 domain controllers at all campuses, including virtualized DC
4. Completed Cisco WLC 5508 HA integration
5. Extended virtualization footprint to PSTF
6. Upgraded Image Management system

Refresh Hardware
In order to keep current with the latest technology, Technology Services continually looks for improvement opportunities. The following hardware replacements provided new enhancements for students and staff this past year.

1. Completed Brighton Campus WIFI Site survey and added 20 additional APs to campus footprint, buildings 5, 6, 11, 12. (35% increase in footprint)
2. Evaluated, designed, implemented, migrated all data to EMC SAN for Brighton, PSTF
3. Implemented 8/16Gbps Brocade fiber channel infrastructure at Brighton/PSTF

Classrooms
Classrooms are the heart of the college and are continually evaluated to insure the latest and greatest computers are available to our students. The following classrooms have been upgraded during the past year.

1. Configured and installed Cisco819G Cellular internet service in three mobile trailers
2. Installed over 250 New PC in classrooms 9-156, 161,9-164, 9-143A, 9-177, 9-183, 9-189, 30-4262 and 30-5271
3. Created New TRS math lab 9-243
4. Updated all images on classroom PCs
5. Configured and installed 15 laptops and six PCs in the EDIWS mobile labs

Training and Professional Development
Training is critical to the operation of the college systems and insuring that the users of the systems are knowledgeable and aware of the technology employed by the college. The following presentations were provided by Technology Services staff during the year.
1. Presented Infrastructure updates at 2014 June Professional Development Week
2. Presentation WIFI upgrades at 2014 Professional Development Week
3. Staffed a table at MCC’s Tech Night March 2013, talking with prospective students about exciting career opportunities in information technology.

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**Services**

Technology Services is the staff that works behind the scenes to make technology work on campus. The Technology Services staff provided the following services during the year.

1. Performed Wireless signal coverage survey and report for the Residence Halls
2. Installed six PCs in the Career Center for two weeks in August to support Advising overflow
3. Provided PC support (4 laptops and a printer) for an Office of Student Life and Leadership Development pilot incorporating Banner lookups into orientation check-in
4. Maintained phones in classrooms, emergency phones and Blue light units, call processing and ACD applications
5. Perform Critical Backups and recovery on network storage
6. Perform after hours system administration to servers and networking infrastructure
7. Implemented Clockwork Scheduling System for students with disabilities
8. Systems Specialists facilitated the implementation of the Adirondack system, which will help the Housing and Residence Life department more effectively manage their student housing system.
9. CNS management and technical staff are called upon to help make decisions that affect the technical direction of the college as a whole. Through formal planning sessions, or simply by giving informal advice to members of the college community on technical matters, expertise is shared to further the mission of the college.
10. Computer Specialist closed over 800 trouble job ticket.
11. Microcomputer Repair Technicians closed over 3300, trouble job tickets.

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**IT Security Initiatives**

Security has become the critical need of any institution and MCC is no exception. The Technology Services staff provided ongoing security services during the past year including:

1. Evaluate and seek ways to improve IT security practices
2. Developed and online Blackboard Security Awareness Training Course for Employees
3. Performed PII scans of MCC’s network storage
4. Perform port scans on servers
5. Promoted National Cyber Security Month with posters, tribute articles, DSN signage
6. Developed an IT security Policy and several SLA with Vendors
7. Developed Wiki for policies and procedures container
Printing Services

Facts

- Printing Services completed 13,834 total work requests for copying, printing and other services during the past year. These requests involved a range of services including multi-color promotional materials, course packs, envelopes, business cards, reports and departmental copying requests.

- 2,202 work requests were processed and completed in January 2013 - our busiest month - the average monthly number of work requests is 970.

- 10,670 work requests were received using the on-line request form this past year. This represents a 10% increase in on-line form submissions from the previous year.

- 9,881 work requests were completed for the various departments within the Academic Services Division. This represents 71% of the total college requests.

- 3,021 graduation diplomas and certificates were produced by Printing Services in 2014.

Accomplishments

In January a new lease agreement was completed for two digital devices used in the Main Copy Center located in building 3. We realized a savings of $4,600 over what we were paying for the previous units. The multifunction devices are Oce Varioprint 110 units distributed by Cannon Corporation. The devices have proven to be very powerful and reliable equipment. They utilize a lower fusing temperature which reduces the number of paper jams due to less heat and less static build up on the paper surface. The lower fuser temperatures are more energy efficient and are better for the environment. The devices also duplex print at a faster speed than our previous devices, and this feature, along with the reduced paper jams, contributes to greater productivity.