Information Technology STEPs to Success

I. Background

In 2009 Washburn University began to address concerns that its information technology (IT) plans, projects, and priorities were not keeping up with current and future expectations. Therefore, an evaluation project was approved to determine campus requirements and how IT resources and services met those needs. This IT assessment was conducted by Kaludis Consulting in early 2010 and included input from more than 360 University students, faculty, staff and administrators. In April/May, 2010, the findings and recommended actions were presented to the Technology Steering Committee, Faculty IT Advisory Council, Faculty Senate, WSGA, Academic Deans and Directors, and Staff Council.

The IT assessment study identified several major areas, which were supported by positive campus feedback. These IT enhancements recommendations were focused on:

1. Improving IT shared governance, planning, and support services.
2. Enhancing technology support for teaching, learning, and research.
3. Upgrading Washburn’s network, infrastructure, and technology resources.
4. Streamlining and enhancing student services, operations, and reporting.
5. Promoting communications, collaboration, information sharing, and stewardship.

II. Strategic Technology Enhancement Projects (STEP)

Based on campus input provided during the IT assessment plus ongoing feedback, ISS leadership established a framework for developing technology improvement plans that would:

a. Support “Washburn: 150 Forward – A Strategic Plan for the University’s Future”.
b. Maintain and build on the successes of existing technological resources.
c. Address problematic or insufficient technologies to improve capacity or performance.
d. Develop solutions that address emerging campus requirements or new opportunities that depend on technology resource or support
e. Positioning the University to take advantage of useful and flexible technologies.

What’s a STEP?

A STEP, which stands for Strategic Technology Enhancement Projects, is defined plan and solution that addresses a significant IT need, deficiency, or changing requirement. Some STEPs are merely extensions of ongoing University or ISS service expectations; while others are new initiatives. Some STEP efforts are the responsibility of ISS, while others are joint efforts or even the sole responsibility of other departments, offices, or committees. STEP projects depend upon input and recommendations provided by the Washburn community, existing committees, task forces, or other academic or institutional leadership.

The ISS web-site contains descriptions of STEPs developed to provide a more successful information technology environment for Washburn’s students, faculty, and staff.