2014

ITS Fall Update 2014

Sue Aber

Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

Dear Trinity Community,

Information Technology Services (ITS) Update

Our ITS team uses the summer months to focus on new initiatives, infrastructure and system upgrades, so we have a few highlights we would like to share. It seems that this summer has gone by quicker than others, but it is great to see the campus humming with activity once again.

Staffing Updates

Cheryl Cape joined the Educational Technology group in early July as an instructional technologist. Cheryl came to us from the University of Findlay where she initially taught undergraduate Earth Science courses before taking on a faculty liaison role with the Center for Teaching Excellence.   With Cheryl's arrival, support for academic departments has been realigned along divisional boundaries: Cheryl supports the Physical & Natural Sciences, Sue Denning Arts & Humanities and Dave Tatem supports the Social Sciences.

In mid-June Jan Gorman was promoted to Associate Director of Enterprise applications. Jan joined our Enterprise team as a programmer/analyst around February 2012 after a career with Northeast Utilities. In this new role, Jan has been instrumental in leading the roll-out of the Admissions paperless process.

Educational Technology

The Educational Technology team began their summer with the hosting of the first Summer Educational Technology Institute, a program designed to encourage the thoughtful use of technology to expand liberal arts learning beyond course timeslots and classroom walls. The participating faculty members were Meredith Safran (Classics), Joe Palladino (Engineering), Rachel Leventhal-Weiner (Educational Studies) & John Alcorn (LACS). The program provided the platform for the faculty members to explore a variety of technologies and facilitated the sharing of experiences of tools and approaches tried by colleagues. The summer institute was sponsored by ITEC, the Dean of Faculty Office and ITS.

The Educational Technology group is also settling into their offices in the LITC 105 space, the Center for Educational Technology. We are excited to have everything available in one area, which provides greater opportunity to improve our services to faculty and students in support of academic projects. Although the space is still a work-in-progress, accessibility to the team and the equipment is greatly enhanced and the center will shortly become part of the 24 hour zone. The offices for the Educational Technology team are adjacent to the space and our student technology assistants (STAs) will staff the area from Noon to 8 p.m. All equipment that was previously housed in FITC has been relocated to the Center for Educational Technology. With this move, the FITC space has been made available for a new

initiative that was recently announced: the opening of the Financial Research and Technology Center. Located in this space will be 11 Bloomberg terminals - computers that are connected to Bloomberg Financial Services. Each workstation has dual monitors and a specialized keyboard that is programmed to execute common actions. The room will be officially opened on September 24th and will also be available to students and faculty as part of the 24 hour zone in the Library. While this software is known for use on market portfolio and risk analytics it can be used extensively as a research tool. We expect the investment club to be making their home in the adjoining office. Faculty and students are encouraged to explore the exciting new space. ITS will take primary responsibility for support of the Financial Research and Technology Center with Cheryl Cape as the primary contact. Please join us for the Open House on September 24 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

In other Educational Technology news Sue Denning presented the college's work on the advising portfolio this summer on interface design as a mode of self-reflection at this summer's Associate for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEBL) conference in Boston. Dave has been focusing his efforts on restructuring the STA program, which he is now responsible for and Cheryl has been instrumental in developing the new Moodle Resource site: http://commons.trincoll.edu/Moodle The group is also developing a classroom site that lists the equipment housed in each room, photos of room configurations, and guides for using them. http://commons.trincoll.edu/classrooms

"SCALE-UP" Physics

Renovations to the Physics teaching laboratory McCook 219 have recently been completed, revitalizing the space and transforming it into a SCALE-UP (Student-Centered Active Learning Environment for Undergraduate Programs) classroom. This education research-based initiative led by Barbara Walden & Brett Barwick changes the way first-semester introductory physics is being taught this semester. Rather than separate lectures and labs, this new approach integrates lab and other hands-on activities directly in to the classroom. Classes meet 3 times a week for a 2-hour slot.   The room holds four large tear-drop tables equipped with laptop computers, each of which will accommodate groups of 3 students to support and encourage collaborative pedagogy that is central to the course. There is projection on 3 walls and instead of traditional white-boards, wall-talkers (whiteboard wallpaper) have been installed around the room to provide maximum writing surface close to each work group. We look forward to hearing how the students like this innovative approach to physics. Take a moment to stop by and look at this new vibrant space.

Classrooms and Labs

As part of our annual re-imaging of lab and classroom computers we have decided to restore the generic lab sign-on in the LITC B02, B03 and Blume labs, as it exists elsewhere on campus. Part of the reasoning behind this change is a first step in addressing the slow boot-up time of these computers.

The computers in the Blume Lab & Seabury 205 were replaced this summer. Other learning space initiatives include new whiteboard in the B03 lab and Seabury 205, upgraded instructor's work-stations in approximately 20 classrooms with projector replacements scheduled for half a dozen places. These new Apple Computers no longer have built-in optical (CD/DVD) drives. If you need one please contact the helpdesk. For a detailed list, please see the [classroom](#) web page on the ITS site. We are also working on upgrading or replacing the remaining Windows XP machines on campus, because this operating system is no longer supported by Microsoft. We spent much time over the last year identifying and upgrading these machines. If you still use a Trinity supported Windows XP machine please get in touch with us to work out a migration path.

During the Ferris Athletic Center renovation project we installed 12 new 55" touchscreen Mondopad computers. An additional 70" version was installed in the Reynolds Conference Room. We have also permanently mounted the tele-presence equipment in the Library Seminar room, which will make it easier for faculty to use. The equipment will be used next spring as Russian Studies will be offering 2 tele-presence courses in collaboration with Connecticut College.

System Upgrades

Taking advantage of the summer break we began our upgrades by patching of the voice mail system. We also upgraded WordPress, Moodle, and PeopleSoft, migrated our website to the SharePoint 2013 platform and upgraded our back-end storage systems. The storage upgrade laid the foundation for improving our ability to provide larger file shares and ultimately increase email storage capability.

The first phase of our Exchange email system took place this summer with the replacement of the webmail splash screen. We are targeting Trinity Days to complete the Exchange upgrade. We are pleased to announce that with this upgrade campus constituents will gain a significant increase in mailbox size. Faculty and staff will be allocated 1.5 Gigabytes of space up from the current limit of 300 Megabytes. Students will be allocated 750 Megabytes of space, up from the current limit of 200 Megabytes. We still encourage everyone to continue to be diligent in deleting mail that isn't needed, but we also recognize this increase in capacity is long overdue! In addition to improving the mailbox storage capacity, the goal of the upgrade is to improve reliability, speed as well as migrate away from less secure methods of access. As part of the change we will be requiring connections only be made via encrypted protocols (Authenticated SMTP, IMPAS and POPS). This may require some small modification to client computer settings.

Infrastructure

The first-year dorm rooms for Elton, Jones & Smith residence halls are all sporting the new electronic locks, which are card access only. We also began replacing the electronic locks on the dorm exteriors for Elton, Jones, Smith, Wheaton, Jackson, the Boathouse and the President's house. Over 300 locks were replaced this summer. These new Salto locks, which we installed in the Crescent St. housing last

year, can be reprogrammed without the need to send someone to the door. This will allow us to make changes much quicker and offer better services.

With the changes made this summer related to our internet connections we have doubled our internet connection speeds and changed out our bandwidth shapers. Our old shapers did not scale to the increased demand and worked by giving each device a set consistent speed. The new system lets each device use as much as it needs and restricts the largest consumers of our bandwidth only when our campus connection is nearing full utilization. This should dramatically speed up network connections before 8 p.m. (on most days our largest internet usage is from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.). We also switched the way Trinity connects to the Internet. Previously our Internet traffic was divided by sending all residential Internet traffic out one connection and all administrative and academic traffic out another, with some fail over if one of the links went down. Our new configuration automatically sends all Internet traffic out through the best connection and provides for automatic failover.

Administrative & Web Development Initiatives

Effective August 27, we introduced on-line transcript requests through TC Online/PeopleSoft. Students can use the new process for requesting transcripts for Graduate Schools, etc. but alumni will continue to make transcript requests through the paper process for the time being. The second phase of the on-line transcript request will be to make the requests available through the National Clearing House. Roll-out of the web-time entry continued this summer for student workers with the expectation that all students will be using this process during the fall semester.

Summer is always a time for supporting the fiscal year-end activities, but in addition to that the Enterprise application team focused much of its efforts implementing a new document imaging system, Image now. This paperless process for Admissions will be in effect for the fall 2014 application season. The process is quite interactive with data feeds passing back and forth between PeopleSoft and Image Now: a particularly good example is the Admissions electronic Score Card where they track summary information and admissions officer's ratings. Common application documents are imported directly into Image Now and are placed into the automated workflows. During the reading period, Admissions Officers will be reading and annotating application files on-line. This will eliminate the practice of printing out the 7500 applications we receive electronically and filing in paper folders. Advancement, Accounting and the Registrars Offices currently use a document imaging system called Open Docs. As a second phase of the project, existing documents will be migrated to the new platform and support of Open Docs will be discontinued. After these first two phases, additional offices including the offices of Financial Aid, the Registrar and Dean of Students will begin using the system as well.

An evaluation of software solutions to support the Board of Trustees was conducted this summer. We looked at several 3rd party solutions that are geared to generating online board-books, but we found

that they didn't provide many more features than SharePoint, but illustrated that our current site was dated and not well maintained. Thus a decision was made to focus on a redesign under SharePoint 2013 which has a more intuitive layout.

In another project that has been initiated by the DOF Office and the First Year program Jean Pierre Haeberly developed a process to automatically place students in the First Year Seminars, which historically has been a manual process performed by the Registrar's Office. The goal of the project is to place students in their top selections while optimizing the academic goals of diversity and class make-up. This new process was in place for the assignment of fall 2014 first year seminars and appeared to achieve the desired result.

The Advising Portal now includes an Alumni search feature that gives faculty information about current jobs our alumni hold. The initiative was a project that came from the Career Development Advising Committee as faculty were looking for an easy way to access information that help conversations with majors and prospective majors providing concrete examples of what our alums have done with their degrees. Advisors are able to search by major, industry or geographic location. The data presented is a result of a department sponsored alumni survey that began in fall 2013, seeking alums willing to share their stories on-line, speak with students and/or host internships. The survey provides an opportunity to collect current information and seeks permission to use their biographic information for advising students and for providing content on the College's public web site. The next phase of this project will be the development of a web-part that will provide dynamic lists of alumni information on department web pages. In addition, the Communications Office will profile alumni who provided us background information on their careers and their personal journey. Only about a dozen departments have been completed at this time, but we will resume surveying alumni this fall, so please reach out to Rachael Barlow if you haven't already agreed to be a part of the survey process.

HelpDesk

Just a quick reminder that we retired the lock-line email address this summer. All requests for lock/door and or card access should be made through the ITS helpdesk along with other IT related requests. Please know that it is helpful to us if outages or problems are reported as soon as they occur. Through our web self-service you can create a ticket directly at http://itshelp.trincoll.edu , or if you prefer call the helpdesk at ext. 2100 or email at helpesk@trincoll.edu.

Data Security

As part of our on-going data security initiatives we have reached out to incoming first-year students, encouraging them to adopt good practices around management of passwords, relaying the importance of three points: creating complex passwords or pass phrases, never sharing your password and avoid responding to emails asking for your password or other secure personal information.

Education on data security is an on-going initiative. We see phishing scams that are getting more sophisticated. Like many of our peers we have invested in "Securing the Human" online training that will be rolled out later this semester to employees.

Due to work on re-imaging we have not had an opportunity to continue implementing Identity Finder, but will be resuming roll-out this fall. This effort is to address best practices in storing and protecting personally identifiable information (PII) such as social security numbers and other sensitive data (credit card numbers and bank account information).

If you have any questions about any of these initiatives I can be reached at ext.2525 or email, Suzanne.Aber@trincoll.edu.

Sue Aber

Director of Information Technology Services & Chief Information Officer