

2013

ITS Summer Plans Update 2013

Sue Aber

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/is_updates

Recommended Citation

Aber, Sue, "ITS Summer Plans Update 2013" (2013). *Information Services updates*. 38.
https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/is_updates/38

June 7, 2013

Dear Trinity Community,

Information Technology Services (ITS) Update

As the campus quiets down for the summer, ITS has begun working on summer upgrades and new initiatives. We also welcome several new staff members to our team.

Welcome & Farewell

Jason Jones will be joining the ITS leadership team as the Director of Educational Technology on June 17th. Jason comes to us from Central Connecticut State University where he was a professor of English. Many of you may recognize Jason as a co-editor of ProfHacker, a popular blog featured in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Jason brings classroom experience as well as a love for technology and innovation. Reporting to Jason will be the Instructional Technologists and the Learning Space Manager. We are excited to have Jason on our team.

We are pleased to announce that Fred Kass has joined the ITS team as the Director of Networking and Infrastructure Services, effective June 10th. Fred joins us from Mt. Holyoke College where he has held a variety of positions over 16 years, most recently as the Associate Director of Networking and Systems. Fred will be responsible for managing the teams of Networking & Systems, Distributed Computing and Access Control, following in Peter Sobering's footsteps.

A farewell and thank you for 30+ years of service go out to Peter Sobering, who is retiring at the end of July. Peter's quiet demeanor and great sense of humor have been inspirational to many to us. For me personally Peter has been the best partner & colleague one could ask for. Enjoy your retirement Peter, you will be missed!

We also welcomed two new programmer/analysts to our Enterprise Application team. Brian Flynn joined the group in February and comes to us from Blackboard. Jan Gorman joined our team in April and comes to us from Northeast Utilities. Brian & Jan have both hit the ground running and we are very excited to have them as part of the ITS team.

Upgrades

As usual we have a variety of system upgrades that will (or already have been) be completed this summer, beginning with the Moodle Upgrade that took place on Wednesday, May 22nd. The new feature with this release is the drag & drop capability. Scheduled for June 10th is the COGNOS reporting upgrade to Version 10.2, this latest version provides for enhanced dashboard capabilities. The Web Help desk ticketing system is being upgraded on Tuesday, June 11th. This is mostly due to a change in licensing structure. The PeopleSoft patch release will take place on Saturday, June 22nd. This patch

includes standard maintenance updates for 7 bundles. Some noticeable changes are in the Student Records area, the Student Milestone page/process was reorganized and in In Advancement, the Person Profile page/report has been modified to include additional educational and relationship data. Dates have not yet been set, but will occur sometime in July is the EMS Event Management system upgrade and the WordPress Server upgrade.

Academic Initiatives

ITEC & CTL in conjunction with ITS hosted the Spring Institute on Teaching & Technology (SITT) on May 14th. The morning was packed with great information sharing. The day started with presentations by ITEC grant winners, Mary Sandoval & Renny Fulco. Mary spoke about the videos she created through Camtasia on step by step problem solving to aid students in her calculus classes and Renny talked about how she incorporated Wikis' into her Health Policy class. This was followed by lively presentations by Lisa Dierker, Wesleyan University Professor, who spoke about her experience teaching a MOOC. She was surprised at the kinds of connections that were made with students & impressed with the community interactions. Lisa Spiro, formerly of NITLE was a virtual guest speaker who talked about online initiatives in the liberal arts setting. The final group to talk were the participants of "Where's the Classroom" discussion about their experiences with MOOCs. Some thought classes were very well done & could see incorporating some components of what they saw into their own teachings.

Campus Safety Initiatives

Our latest project for Campus Safety is the implementation of a new dispatching and report management system called Report Exec. Campus Safety Officers were trained on the new package on May 30th and the system went live on June 4th. This system will be the basis for the college's Clery Reporting and will replace the dispatching component of our aging SSITS system. We will be finishing up the installation of the 14 new blue lights & 12 security cameras by the end of June for completion of the line-of-sight perimeter surveillance. Overall we have doubled the number of cameras in the last year, totaling 165.

Virtual Desktop (VDI)

Beginning this summer, ITS will begin a pilot program in the LITC labs to move the Windows image off the desktop and onto servers in our machine room. The 1st phase of this project involves upgrading our connections in the labs and installing a new server cluster and disk array. The 2nd phase involves building a virtual desktop image, complete with all of the applications that run in these labs. Finally, a special Window's client will be loaded onto the 50+ workstations in LITC B02 and B03 which will be used to access the virtual image running on the server cluster. Through the pilot installation we should be able to provide a user experience identical to the experience of using a dedicated workstation in the lab. There are many advantages to running a roomful of "virtual" PCs on a single server cluster including ease of updates, improved reliability, and greater flexibility in managing our lab

images. As a user, the transition to virtualization should be seamless, and your day to day experience will remain pretty much unchanged. Lab users will retain the ability to work with all the same applications that are available in the lab today. On older machines, applications may even run faster than before. Internet access will be available just as it is now, as will printing and access to externally attached thumb drives.

Learning Space Committee & Classrooms

Over the course of the summer we will be updating instructor work station in 40 of our classrooms with new mac mini's. We have completed the refurbishing of blackboards in McCook 303, 305, 309, 309A . Other learning space committee projects are the installation of additional document cameras, upgraded projection in the Blume Lab, Theater and Dance TC-156 renovation (conversion of dance studio to black box) and updating of technology and seating for the writing center.

Construction & Infrastructure Projects

ITS is providing network infrastructure and electronic access control support to various summer construction projects including bringing up voice, data and CATV services in the new Crescent residence halls, the Vernon Social Center, the Gallows Hill project and the renovation of the auditorium in LSC. The Crescent Street facilities will be Trinity's 1st residential installation of the new Salto card access system. We are also working this summer to enhance and expand Wi-Fi coverage on campus to help address the continued and growing influx of wireless electronics such as smartphones, laptops, tablets and other handheld devices on campus. We will be installing a total of 45 new access points to replace older or less powerful devices, and in some cases add service in areas where the campus members have encountered problems (23 in residence halls & 22 in common or office spaces). In addition to upgrading and adding new access points around campus, some of the backbone for the wireless network will be replaced. Many locations that have a high number of wireless access points have older switches that connect the access points to the network. These 3com switches will be upgraded to 8- or 24-port Cisco switches, so this work will bring the wireless devices up to the current standard of our wired network. Also, the new switches are more reliable and easier to manage.

Enhancements to the Trinflix video streaming system for the Library were completed this year. The Library has enthusiastically embraced this service having converted over 1000 titles during the academic year.

Enterprise Applications

The roll-out of online reporting of Time & Labor through PeopleSoft began this spring, with the expectation that all offices will be on-board with online reporting of time by the beginning of the fall semester. Next on the list is bringing the student payroll into the process. This eliminates a lot of data entry that is currently being handled by the payroll office. Working with the Registrar's Office the

National Student Clearinghouse functionality has been updated to support changes in the reporting requirements. The team is also working on the implementation of Academic Works, a software package that will streamline the process of awarding, managing and reporting our endowed scholarships, a project that will primarily benefit the Office of Financial Aid and the Development Office. Enhancements to the data collection process for the parent information as part of the First Year portal have been implemented. Further refinement of the loading of data into PeopleSoft will result in a great savings of labor and time in data entry for the Development Office.

Web Development

Other enhancements to the first-year portal include the ability to submit ID photos online for those students who are not able to attend June Days. We expect this enhancement to save a lot of time and energy at the start of the school year. Last year we had about half the incoming student population that needed to have ID cards, and dorm access activated as they arrived on campus. By collecting this data earlier it will significantly reduce the number of last minute changes that need to be made, making the move in process a little more streamlined.

Other projects underway include a new online tool for the Office of Residential Life to use for management room assignments & access control information. This replaces a spreadsheet process that was cumbersome & will make it simpler to update information by groups of students. Also under development is a web-based planning tool that the Dean of Faculty Office and department chairs will use to manage teaching loads. This tool will be used to document courses that will be taught the “next” academic year and identify department staffing requirements. We anticipate being able to begin using this tool for the fall 2013 planning cycle.

Graduate Studies

The graduate studies program is beginning to embrace Hybrid Courses with four faculty members working on blending their traditional course time with online activities and assignments. One of the objectives is to be able to provide a more flexible learning environment for our Graduate students who are often balancing full-time jobs, family obligations along with their academic studies.

Wrap-Up

Did you know that you can save yourself some time & speed up service by entering tickets into our helpdesk system yourself at (<http://itshelp.trincoll.edu>). If you have any questions about any of these initiatives or organizational changes I can be reached at ext.2525 or email, Suzanne.Aber@trincoll.edu.

Sue Aber

Director of Information Technology Services