



WKU[®]

Information Technology Services (ITS) Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

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Introduction by the AVP

In the modern higher educational climate, all institutions are experiencing common challenges such as changes in population, local and US economies, social and political culture, government funding, and more. Each of these challenges has impacted Western Kentucky University (WKU) on a global, national, state, and local level. In response to these challenges, WKU has undergone transformations in leadership and culture.

Information Technology Services (ITS) is the new name for the technology support unit of WKU. As a part of WKU's leadership transformation, ITS is now part of a new division of Strategy, Operations, and Finance with a new Executive Vice President. Now under an Assistant Vice President, ITS has also been internally reorganized. The new structure enables ITS to maintain high levels of service while also creating efficiencies that address the University's challenges.

Culturally, WKU has experienced a renewed focus on planning and strategy. In 2018, an energized campus and local community engaged and collaborated in the development of a new ten-year strategic plan called "*Climbing to Greater Heights.*" As much as this new document represents a plan for the future, it also represents transparency, optimism, and determination on the part of everyone that WKU will be successful in its effort to prepare a diverse body of citizen-leaders for the future.

In keeping with the example of WKU's broader planning efforts, ITS has developed its own strategic plan to help guide the unit as we endeavor to provide WKU students, faculty, and staff with superior customer service; reliable and timely technical support; state-of-the-art technology tools; comprehensive training; and convenient access to computing and communications resources. The plan will assist ITS in the use of technology to enhance student learning, faculty teaching, and staff productivity.

Simply put, if ITS can fully execute the ideas contained within this plan, WKU will benefit from an efficient, innovative, collaborative, secure, and data-driven operation that will advance our community and our University into the future. Thank you for reading.

Greg Hackbarth

Assistant Vice President for Information Technology
Information Technology Services
Western Kentucky University

Guiding Principles

To guide ITS decision-making and operations, we will adhere to the following:

- Align technology decisions and priorities with the WKU Strategic Plan and view technology and data as tools that can help the University achieve its goals;
- Allocate resources in such a way that promotes their optimal use and a high return on investment;
- Maintain an outward focus which highlights support of the University community, collaboration with stakeholders, external partnerships, and transparency;
- Use technology to improve all aspects of student success, teaching, and learning;
- Use technology to improve all aspects of University operations;
- Focus on the future, supporting professional development and skill enhancement of ITS staff and encouraging innovation;
- Manage and inform the WKU community regarding privacy and information security and provide a stable and secure technology environment, balancing compliance with system accessibility and appropriate data availability; and
- Streamline, standardize, and document internal procedures in order to maximize our efficiency.

Climbing to Greater Heights

The WKU Strategic Plan, *“Climbing to Greater Heights,”* outlines three major areas: our students, our hill, and our community and beyond. The major goals in each area are enumerated below for use in mapping to ITS strategic goals, later in this document.

Our Students

1. **Affordability and Accessibility** – *“Ensure the WKU Experience remains affordable and accessible to every qualified student.”*
2. **A Diverse Body of Students** – *“Enroll a diverse body of regional and global undergraduate, graduate, and nontraditional students who are fully prepared for a rigorous, fulfilling college experience at WKU.”*
3. **Completion and Success** – *“Ensure WKU student completion and success.”*
4. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – *“Enact and practice all aspects of WKU’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan.”*
5. **Preparation for the Global Stage** – *“Prepare student for career and life in a global context.”*

Our Hill

1. **Policies and Practices** – *“Establish policies and practices that promote a collegial work environment, overall employee wellness, stewardship of place, and an appreciation for WKU’s history and traditions.”*
2. **Sustainable Budget Model** – *“Implement a budget model that is sustainable, supports institutional priorities that ensure student success, and rewards strategic performance across the enterprise.”*
3. **A Culture of Innovation** – *“Increase faculty participation in programs offered through the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning to build a culture of innovation through the use of current and emerging instructional technologies, and create specific programming to enhance teaching and active learning.”*
4. **Research and Creative Activities** – *“Incentivize and support research and creative activities that promote student learning, expand university outreach and service, and bolster the regional economy.”*

Our Community and Beyond

1. **A Regional Lighthouse** – *“Establish WKU as a regional lighthouse to provide resources, attract talent, and nurture intellectual capital in the communities we serve.”*
2. **Global Learning** – *“Leverage WKU’s international reach to create a dynamic and diverse university community with robust global learning for every student.”*
3. **Continuing Education** – *“Facilitate continuing education, retraining, and degree completion, leveraging online resources and WKU’s regional campuses.”*
4. **Quality of Life** – *“Improve the quality of life regionally and support regional economic diversification.”*
5. **Athletic Excellence** – *“Support athletic excellence and the success of WKU student-athletes.”*
6. **Alumni Ambassadors** – *“Engage alumni as global ambassadors and cultivate ongoing relationships that last a lifetime.”*
7. **Investing in the Future** – *“Energize and inspire individuals, foundations, and corporations to invest in the future of WKU and enable our climb to greater heights.”*

The full strategic plan is available on the WKU website at www.wku.edu/strategicplan.

ITS Goals and Strategies

The following represent the goals and strategies of the ITS unit. Noted alongside each strategy is the corresponding goal(s) from the WKU strategic plan, noted as Student (S1, S2, etc.), Hill (H1, H2, etc.), and Community and Beyond (C1, C2, etc.).

Goal 1: Continually improve processes, develop “top-tier” IT services, foster data-driven decision-making, and generate business value.		
Strategies:	(1) Continue modernizing and upgrading major applications; enable maximum use of data assets.	S5, H1, H3
	(2) Create efficiencies that support cost savings and return on technology investments.	H1, H2
	(3) Maintain and improve the availability of major applications and data.	S5, H3, H4
Goal 2: Practice communication, collaboration, and a governance-based approach to planning and projects.		
Strategies:	(1) Mature project management and improve project prioritization.	H1
	(2) Embrace the RAMP (RCM) budgeting process and enable proper investment in technology.	H1, H2
	(3) Increase community and stakeholder communication and collaboration.	C1
Goal 3: Create a secure computing environment and an informed campus community with respect to security and privacy.		
Strategies:	(1) Increase technology awareness through training and regular assessment and reporting of risks.	H1
	(2) Monitor for compliance with regulations and implement the latest security techniques and technology.	H1
Goal 4: Provide desirable technology support options and enhanced instructional tools.		
Strategies:	(1) Enhance learning spaces, enable collaboration, and improve access to resources.	S5, H1, H3, C3
	(2) Bolster support coverage and personalize available support options.	S5, H3
Goal 5: Support and develop our technology workforce and adapt to changes in the IT market.		
Strategies:	(1) Retain technical talent and promote professional skill growth.	H1, H2, C3
	(2) Respond quickly to changes in resource demands.	H3, H4

Table 1: ITS goals and strategies with corresponding goals from the WKU strategic plan.

Tactics

Goal 1: Continually improve processes, develop “top-tier” IT services, foster data-driven decision-making, and generate business value.	
Strategy 1: Continue modernizing and upgrading major applications; enable maximum use of data assets.	
Tactic:	(1) Modernize reporting and analytics; implement executive dashboarding or simple methods of data access for managers.
	(2) Implement an enterprise workflow system.
	(3) Implement the self-service modules of Ellucian Banner 9.
	(4) Upgrade/replace the degree audit system.
	(5) Implement a budget development system.
	(6) Implement a travel management system.
Strategy 2: Create efficiencies that support cost savings and return on technology investments.	
Tactic:	(1) Simplify system integrations through the use of delivered APIs; minimize file-based integrations.
	(2) Simplify the IT environment by consolidating vendor platforms; standardize on unmodified, vendor-delivered applications.
	(3) Aggressively pursue long-term savings through multi-year and cooperative contract negotiations and loyalty discounts.
	(4) Embrace sustainable practices and educate the university on equipment disposal, energy use, and paper use.
	(5) Identify and collaborate with units across the university to centralize services where possible to eliminate redundancies.
	(6) Standardize and formalize/document procedures to reduce the effort and time required to provide technology support.
Strategy 3: Maintain and improve the availability of major applications and data.	
Tactic:	(1) Develop a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and refine our Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) in coordination with campus units.
	(2) Service and update our infrastructure to maximize or maintain high levels of usability, accessibility, and resilience.
	(3) Approach application delivery with a mobile-compatible mindset and increase support for mobile devices.
	(4) Utilize clientless VPN to simplify access, and/or implement multi-factor authentication (MFA) to reduce reliance on VPN.
	(5) Implement cloud services such as file storage to further support remote and mobile users.
	(6) Continually improve system monitoring/alerting and increase automation.
	(7) Maintain sufficient financial reserves to insure against unexpected emergency needs.

Goal 2: Practice communication, collaboration, and a governance-based approach to planning and projects.	
Strategy 1: Increase community and stakeholder communication and collaboration.	
Tactic:	(1) Focus on community awareness and promotion of technology projects; increase user education efforts regarding technology.
	(2) Increase communication with colleges and Deans through participation in the Deans' council and direct meetings.
	(3) Establish an Academic Technology Advisory Committee with a focus on instructional technology advancements.
	(4) Establish liaison programs and focus groups among employees and students.
	(5) Implement support standards for faculty technology and manage regular equipment replacement.
Strategy 2: Embrace the RAMP (RCM) budgeting process and enable proper investment in technology.	
Tactic:	(1) Provide a scope of services agreement to campus; collaborate with primary units and RCM governance to develop ITS budget.
	(2) Provide research comparing WKU ITS to benchmarks in terms of technology environment, staffing, spending, and funding.
Strategy 3: Mature project management and improve project prioritization.	
Tactic:	(1) Develop improved methods of reporting and estimating project labor, time, and cost.
	(2) Publish current active and requested projects to improve communication, transparency, and prioritization.
	(3) Work with advisory groups and established governance groups for planning, prioritization, and funding.

Goal 3: Create a secure computing environment and an informed campus community with respect to security and privacy.	
Strategy 1: Increase technology awareness through training and regular assessment and reporting of risks.	
Tactic:	(1) Develop additional user education and online training, and develop a faculty/staff policy attestation mechanism.
	(2) Conduct regular, internal risk assessments with auditors.
Strategy 2: Monitor for compliance and implement the latest security techniques and technology.	
Tactic:	(1) Institute compliance practices related to privacy and encryption where needed.
	(2) Engage partners for security red-teaming and security assessments that include penetration testing.
	(3) Institute Data Loss Prevention (DLP) practices where needed to prevent mishandling of personal or protected information.

Goal 4: Provide desirable technology support options and enhanced instructional tools.

Strategy 1: Enhance learning spaces, enable collaboration, and allow students to access resources wherever they are.

Tactic:	(1) Modernize Student Technology Centers with spaces that allow quick access, collaboration, and student-owned device use.
	(2) Partner with colleges on efficient and accessible software delivery methods such as virtual labs.
	(3) Continually update classroom technology with a focus on flexibility, functionality, and ease-of-use.
	(4) Engage with the Library to develop the WKU Commons concept and the technology-enhanced spaces within it.
	(5) Develop a strategy to better support mobile devices and ensure mobile compatibility of major applications.
	(6) Support access to common cloud services to support teacher education and industry certification.

Strategy 2: Bolster support coverage and personalize available support options.

Tactic:	(1) Provide greater face-to-face interaction with ITS staff for employee training and support.
	(2) Provide additional options for obtaining support (such as text, social, email, etc.)
	(3) Bolster non-business-hours coverage for major system support (service desk, on-call procedures).
	(4) Promote easy-to-use, self-support options such as online training and knowledge base.

Goal 5: Support and develop our technology workforce and adapt to changes in the IT market.

Strategy 1: Retain technical talent and promote professional skill growth.

Tactic:	(1) Encourage professional development and certifications among ITS staff for development/upkeep of skills.
	(2) Regularly monitor the competitive market for IT professionals and respond to changes in a flexible way.
	(3) Support student internship opportunities that allow development of skills that will serve their careers.

Strategy 2: Respond quickly to changes in resource demands.

Tactic:	(1) Employ an elastic workforce strategy to support temporary bursts in labor demand.
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