EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At Information Technology Services (ITS) at the University at Albany, our students, faculty and staff rely on 21st century technologies to advance the University’s mission, meet academic and administrative goals, and support engagement across the institution and beyond. Over the past year, ITS matured under the leadership of a new vice president/chief information officer, introduced new services, and made numerous improvements and upgrades to others. We attracted—and continue to attract—new tenants to our state-of-the-art, Tier III, LEED Gold data center. We worked with every division to leverage the power of technology to advance their goals—and by extension—the University’s mission. Technology is an integral part of the many initiatives we engage in to make our collective aspirations the new reality.

While much of our work was determined in collaboration with campus partners, ITS relied on six goals to provide direction and guide activities over the past year. These were as follows:

1. Support Innovation for Teaching, Learning and Research. This goal encompassed the many ways ITS provided tools and support to improve the teaching, learning and research experience. From new classroom technologies to online communities to high performance computing, ITS implemented new services, upgraded and improved existing ones, and explored technologies for the future.

2. Listen to Technology Users and Build Relationships to Improve and Anticipate Demand of Service. Recognizing the needs of our constituencies and responding accordingly was an effective way to plan for the 21st century IT needs of the campus community. ITS worked with stakeholders at every level to understand issues and meet expectations.

3. Create a Culture of Information Security. ITS effectively safeguarded the University’s digital assets and continually educated the campus about how to best protect these important resources.

4. Foster a Culture of Evidence Through the Use of Data, Reporting and Analytics. Data-driven decision-making is increasingly important in higher education. ITS reinvigorated our Business Intelligence initiative to improve the metrics we use to measure the University’s success.

5. Improve Administrative Efficiencies. ITS engaged in initiatives across divisions to automate processes, reduce manual procedures and increase operational efficiencies. ITS also absorbed a $30,000 budget reduction by improving internal operations.

6. Strengthen Our Service Organization Model. ITS engaged in several internal initiatives to improve service delivery. These included streamlining services, improving relationships and simplifying the way business is conducted with campus colleagues.

This report demonstrates the myriad ways ITS supported students, faculty and staff over the last year. You will see ample evidence of the goals and their influence throughout this document. In keeping with the theme of change, the University has embarked on a new strategic plan under the leadership of President Rodríguez. As a result, ITS is developing the goals, objectives and initiatives to ensure continued alignment with the University’s new direction.

ONE thing is certain when it comes to technology: the only constant is change.
Message from the Vice President and CIO

Friends,

The ITS Annual Report provides an opportunity to reflect on our collective accomplishments. During the past year, we have made many technology improvements for the campus community, and even more connections and partnerships. We have achieved a great deal together, and I am very proud of our many successes.

Much of our success reflects the strong relationships we have formed across the campus, and our shared goal of moving the institution forward. I am gratified by the ways we have supported and sustained one another, balancing multiple priorities in order to advance our mission. As this report will demonstrate, we have made great progress in leveraging technology to support a rich array of academic, research, and business objectives.

I am also very proud of changes we have made within ITS. We are constantly evaluating our ability to improve our services, explore new technologies, and streamline operations. It is not enough to provide technology for technology’s sake; its purpose is to support the success of our faculty and researchers, business offices, and most importantly, our students.

Despite the many changes we have made, there are many more in our future. Next year, I expect to share with you the success of our new Educational Technology Center and Academic and Research Computing Center, numerous new and improved services, more occupants in our Data Center, and increasingly mature processes for organizing and completing our work.

Everything we do, we do for all of you. I hope you see our success as your own.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

T. Simeon Ananou, D.Ed.
Vice President of Information Technology Services and
Chief Information Officer
SUPPORTING THE UNIVERSITY ENTERPRISE

Campus Networks

Some services are so essential to the University enterprise that it is hard to imagine the institution without them. One of these is the University network. The last two decades have seen tremendous reliance on this resource, arguably the lifeblood of the institution. The network engages students and faculty in intellectual discourse; connects researchers from across the institution and around the world; advances the business needs of administrative offices; and helps attract and recruit the best and the brightest to our vibrant institution. ITS strives to manage, maintain and upgrade the network in an environment that is stable, redundant and secure.

Given its importance, the network not only needs to be up and running, but also scalable to meet the increasing demands of the institution. Last fall, ITS contracted with Apogee, Inc. to improve network reliability in all university dormitories. The upgraded service provided residential students with significant increases in Internet speed, the ability to register 5 devices (up from 3), and an option to purchase additional bandwidth and voice services. These improvements, which also included 24x7 support and an on-site technician, collectively contributed to a better student life experience.

<table>
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<th>Internet Service Speed Comparison in Mbps</th>
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<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
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Last spring, ITS also initiated several upgrades to the network on the academic podium. This included increased bandwidth for each building, a long-term project to replace aging equipment, and redundant paths for each building back to our data center. In response to requests for improved wireless in faculty offices, ITS also began exploring viable options to improve access to this vital service.

The University is a member of Internet2 (I2), a consortium of education and research organizations working collaboratively to solve complex IT challenges and develop innovative solutions. UAlbany maintains a separate I2 network for the research efforts of this global community.

Information Security is Everyone’s Responsibility

UAlbany is under constant attack. The University network is threatened thousands of times every hour by cybercriminals seeking to exploit any vulnerabilities. The weakest link in any security strategy is typically human error, so it pays to be vigilant. Over the past year, ITS made several important security investments to protect the University’s digital assets. We also adopted a comprehensive strategy for educating the campus community to recognize cyberattacks, report suspicious activity, and protect their identity and electronic files.

- Last October, ITS celebrated Cyber Security Awareness Month with “Trapped in the Web,” a series of presentations designed to help educate students, faculty and staff on a variety of security-related threats. Presenters included UAlbany students, faculty, and other IT professionals, including Chief Information Security Officer Marty Manjak.
- ITS introduced Phish Alert, a simple icon in Outlook that reports suspicious messages to the UAlbany Information Security team with the single click of a button. More than 4,000 suspicious messages have been reported using Phish Alert since its introduction last fall.
- ITS invested in KnowB4, an online information security education program. Employees with access to sensitive information participated in online training followed by a series of simulated phishes designed to test their ability to identify bogus messages. The Office of the Registrar was one of the University’s star performers. ITS gave them an A+ for protecting our student data!
- Encryption of the University’s electronic assets. This effort used our data classification standards to begin identifying the resources requiring such protection, and helping to prioritize the order in which data should be encrypted. ITS initiated planning efforts for a new series of new firewalls, which will be installed in 2017-18, to further strengthen the University’s information security posture.
- ITS regularly uses several tools to monitor and protect the University network. These efforts paid off this past summer when the Wannacry virus affected numerous organizations across multiple industries. Thanks to the vigilance of our Information Security team, the virus was unable to penetrate the University network for the duration of this international security incident.

The University is a member of Internet2 (I2), a consortium of education and research organizations working collaboratively to solve complex IT challenges and develop innovative solutions. UAlbany maintains a separate I2 network for the research efforts of this global community.
Gauging Customer Satisfaction

Last fall, ITS conducted a customer satisfaction survey using the Higher Education TechQual+ Project, which provides IT leaders with the tools to measure the effectiveness of IT services at their institution. The survey measured performance in three key areas: 1) connectivity and access, 2) technology and collaboration services, and 3) support and training. A sample of students, faculty and staff completed the survey, providing ITS with invaluable data for assessing our services. In addition to advancing efforts for the University Assessment Plan, ITS will use this information to set strategic priorities for projects and services, and connect them with our spending plan. While some survey-related improvements are already underway, expect more data-driven progress in the years ahead.

New Construction

Wherever there is construction, there is technology. ITS plays a significant role in the installation of network and telephony infrastructure in all renovations and new construction. Notable projects in the 2016-17 year included planning for the forthcoming Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (E-TEC), renovations for several academic departments, lecture centers (Uptown Campus) and Draper Hall (Downtown Campus), and dozens of other projects. ITS is typically responsible for the support and delivery of IT services in areas once construction is complete.
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Academic Success

The student academic experience is at the heart of the University mission. Providing the IT infrastructure, tools and support for 21st century technology tools for teaching, learning and research is essential to the mission of ITS. Never before has technology been so deeply engrained in the ways faculty deliver information and how students consume it.

Blackboard played a significant role in traditional, online and hybrid course offerings. Students continue to express satisfaction in using the platform, and the number of courses using Blackboard has risen more than 500 percent in the past decade.

ITS deepened its partnership with the Office of Online Teaching and Learning, an initiative that resulted in growing UAlbany's online course offerings. This partnership facilitated the exploration of ways to enhance the learning experience for students who do not physically set foot on campus.

Experiential learning was another way ITS impacted the student experience. Working with School of Business Professor Sanjay Goel, ITS provided a life-like environment for students pursuing careers in information security. Students were tasked with responding to simulated attacks and other threats in a secured space, providing valuable hands-on experience in fighting cybercrime. Over the past academic year, about 50 students used this innovative virtual environment to test forensic apps and other technologies in a pilot program. ITS hopes this model program will refine further ways to expand technology in other experiential learning efforts.

“In my research and teaching in cyber security we are pushing the envelope of information technology, and our close relationship with Information Technology Services (ITS) at the University is facilitating our endeavors. We are developing quarantined laboratory networks for testing defenses against live attacks for our research through a grant from NIST and a virtualized environment for students to access sophisticated hands-on security laboratories remotely through a grant from NSF. The ITS team has worked with us assiduously to support these projects and we expect to continue working closely with them as we advance our teaching and research.”

• Dr. Sanjay Goel, Director of Research, NYS Center for Information Forensics and Assurance, Chair and Professor, Information Security and Digital Forensics, School of Business
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS (CON’T)

Supporting the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences

New colleges often require new technologies, and the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) was no exception. Several faculty in the new College wanted to engage their students in using state-of-the-art technology tools. In response, ITS created research clusters and high performance computing environments to provide a hands-on teaching and learning experience. While these resources were developed specifically for CEAS, these efforts have broad implications for ITS to continue providing discipline-specific offerings to other colleges, schools and departments in the future.

“When I first joined CEAS, Dean Boyer asked me to work with ITS to specify a cluster that would provide all our faculty with vast computational power. Almost a month later, we finalized specifications and purchased our high-performance computing cluster. Following this, I worked closely with ITS to create faculty research accounts, and accounts for students taking my classes. Last spring, two colleagues and I applied for an NSF grant. The capabilities of this cluster—boosted by the power of ITS—was instrumental in our application. ITS has been an extremely important resource for us in delivering high-performance computing.”

— Dr. Tolga Soyata, Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering, College of Engineering & Applied Sciences

Hardware, Software and Support for Students

ITS has long offered a wide range of equipment, software, and support. Students have free access to a wide range of software packages on over 350 computers in the Information Commons, available at all three University Libraries. ITS made significant improvements to the Mac computers in the Information Commons and the “Mac” classroom in the Science Library. In addition to new machines, ITS purchased and installed an upgrade to Final Cut Pro, a popular software program used for video editing.

For personal machines, all students (as well as faculty and staff) can download Office 365 Plus, which provides access to the full suite of Microsoft productivity software, free of charge. Additionally, several software packages have special pricing for UAlbany students. ITS offers 12 computer application classes scheduled throughout the semester for several popular software programs (Adobe Dreamweaver and Photoshop, Microsoft Office and others) and special topics, (Information Security and Web Accessibility). Additionally, online versions of ITS Computer Classes are offered for Microsoft Office and Dreamweaver. Classes on demand are available by request and can be customized to meet the requestor’s needs for UAlbany Mail and calendars, Microsoft Office, and Global Distribution Groups. Classes are available to all students, faculty and staff at the University. For more information on this service, visit: https://wiki.albany.edu/x/gQr-AQ.

As an R1 institution, UAlbany offers several academic programs, which include course requirements in statistics and research design. While ITS has long provided access to statistical software, this alone is not always sufficient, as many students desire assistance in using and understanding the capabilities of these complex programs. This past spring, ITS began offering hands-on assistance with statistical software such as SPSS, R, and SAS. Students can schedule appointments for tutoring assistance.

The CEAS-ITS partnership further resulted in the purchase of a campus-wide MATLAB license for the University community. Students and faculty now have access to MATLAB, Simulink and many of the add-on toolboxes associated with these programs. These sophisticated tools are used worldwide to analyze complex programs and systems. Given their widespread use, these are critical resources for students in computer engineering and applied sciences. UAlbany students now have the ability to use industry-standard tools to discover, explore and hone the skills they need to be competitive in their discipline.
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS (CON’T)

Hardware, Software and Support for Students (con’t)

ITS worked closely with Dell Computers to provide a variety of laptop configurations to meet a wide range of student needs. Beginning in Fall 2017, students will be able to purchase Dell laptops at discounted prices. More information is available in MyUAlbany in the Technology Discounts section.

Building Better Learning Spaces

Ensuring that the technology in classrooms and other learning spaces remains current requires a cyclical replacement schedule. In 2016-17, ITS invested more than $230,000 to ensure classroom equipment was up-to-date, including the addition of web conferencing capabilities in several rooms on the Downtown Campus. Another area of focus was the School of Public Health, where upgrades included the purchase of digital technology for several smart classrooms.

Better Integration of Student Information

Technology plays an important role in UAlbany Advantage, a comprehensive campus strategy to support student enrollment and retention. The University uses a multifaceted platform developed by the Educational Advisory Board (EAB) that coordinates efforts and interventions for students who may be at risk. UAlbany Advantage is a personalized support system that can identify at-risk individuals and provide them with just-in-time assistance, providing a notable difference in student engagement and retention.

One area where the UAlbany Advantage Program has made great progress is in advisement. Rolled out to incoming freshman just one year ago, EAB is now widely used across the entire campus. Students and advisors alike are extremely pleased with this state-of-the-art advisement system. EAB has proved particularly useful for large departments with multiple advisors. Plans are under way to install kiosks in several locations to serve as the front end for students to schedule and check in for their advisement appointments.

The University has emerged as a regional leader for institutions using the EAB platform. Over the summer, UAlbany hosted a workshop that attracted more than 30 participants from 11 colleges and universities who are also using the product. Attendees spent the day networking, learning how other institutions use the platform, and exploring opportunities for future collaboration.

“UAlbany Advantage has revolutionized our ability to respond to students in appropriate and personal ways that directly impacts their ability to succeed. During the last year, all academic units have incorporated this technology at varying levels in addition to a number of student support services units. This effort has dramatically increased collaboration between student service areas and, subsequently, has improved the University’s ability to respond to and serve our students effectively. The platform provides a unique environment where advisors and faculty can access information about specific students and share information between units.”

Dr. JoAnne Malatesta, Assistance Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Director, Advisement Services Center

Other initiatives to streamline services for students included the following:

- Working closely with the Student Health Center, ITS integrated student electronic medical records with PeopleSoft. This dramatically improved the ability to access accurate data about student vaccinations to the University during the mumps outbreak earlier this year.
- The implementation of Merit Pages provided students with an electronic badging system for University-sanctioned leadership activities. Merit Pages provide students with a transcript reflecting their involvement in community and leadership events. The platform integrates with social media, allowing students to highlight their experience and expertise in their online profiles.
- The Department of Residential Life modernized their check-in process in all University residence halls. The old paper system was replaced with an online one. Residential Life staff now use iPads to check students in, making light work of the administrative process associated with move-in day.
Supporting Digital Initiatives

ITS continued its partnership with the Office of Communications & Marketing to identify a new digital strategy for the University. Rebranding efforts and continued development of a new University website were designed to attract students and their influencers to the University's world-class programs.

Introducing Students to Careers in IT

Sometimes ITS is more than a student’s service provider: we may also be their employer. ITS takes pride in our nearly 60 student employees, many of whom have worked in our organization for the majority of their college career. Almost 40 of these individuals were employed by the walk-in Student Help Desk. Typically hired as sophomores, students often work with ITS for much of their undergraduate career, sometimes even longer. A rigorous training program takes place every summer, preparing students to support their peers in the coming academic year. Working at the Help Desk provides students with a breadth of experience in customer service, interacting with a diverse community, and learning how to troubleshoot a host of technical problems. Announcements are posted in MyUAAlbany whenever there are vacancies.

The Data Communications team, part of Enterprise Infrastructure Services, also employed several students. These positions offered students the opportunity to work directly with network equipment under the supervision of professional technicians. Students assist with a wealth of projects to ensure the network is working properly, getting valuable hands-on experience even as they support one of the University's most valuable infrastructure assets.

The interaction with students isn’t limited to the workplace; ITS occasionally finds a place in the classroom. Five years ago, faculty teaching Informatics courses asked if ITS could provide their students with insight about working in the IT profession. Since then, ITS has offered a series of sessions to Informatics students about what it is like to work in an IT organization in the higher education environment. ITS provides an overview of the entire organization, followed by meetings with each department to take an in-depth look at their portfolio of responsibilities. Students and ITS alike have enjoyed this interactive opportunity. It has also increased participation amongst ITS staff to serve as evaluators for the Informatics Senior Showcase, an event where students present their research on a wide range of topics.

Learning also took place through field projects, where students tackled real-life problems in real work settings. ITS is proud to have sponsored many student internships and field placements over the years. The best kinds of projects are those that give students the opportunity to perform valuable work that ITS cannot otherwise accommodate. This past year, a group of MBA students tackled a field project that addressed an IT industry challenge: comparing on-premise and cloud-based work management solutions. Students provided ITS with a much-needed analysis of features, functionality, and operating costs. This exercise proved invaluable for the students, one of whom was able to recount his experience to help land a job after graduation.

“I would like to thank ITS for providing the opportunity to work with them for our field project. I developed skills from that experience that really helped me get a full-time job as a consultant for VirtUSA.”

- Usama Noor, Consultant at VirtUSA and UAAlbany Alum (Economics ’15, MBA ’17)

Creating a Welcoming Environment for Future Students

ITS engaged with an increasing number of K-12 students in the Capital Region. One avenue for this was the Questar III student internship program, which brought students with technical interests to campus to shadow IT professionals. The weeklong program was a rewarding experience for area high school students and ITS employees alike.

Last March, ITS partnered with the Master Teacher Program in the School of Education to underwrite a Girls in STEM event. The Master Teachers, appointed from across the state, came together to provide 4th-8th grade girls with hands-on workshops across a wide range of science, math, engineering and technology topics. Participants enjoyed a keynote address given by Nathalia Holt, author of “Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars,” and received a UAAlbany backpack to remind them of the University's excellent programs in STEM fields. ITS looks forward to continuing this partnership, and encouraging more local young women to consider what the University has to offer as they prepare for college.
Percentage of Course Sections Using Blackboard

Blackboard Use by Classroom Type
Support for Online Teaching and Learning

2016-17 was an exciting year for initiatives in support of teaching, learning and research. ITS worked closely with faculty and researchers in support of the University’s commitment to innovation and excellence.

“It has been a pleasure working with the professionals at ITS. They have been responsive to our technology needs, professional in their engagements with us and in the resolution of problems, and supportive of our work to foster collaborative partnerships around the world. From installing an audio-visual system to introducing us to the latest technologies in the use of the Internet, ITS has gone over and beyond in supporting the work of the Center for International Education and Global Strategy.”

Dr. Harvey Charles, Dean and Vice Provost, International Education

Blackboard continued to be extremely popular among faculty as well as students. ITS automatically creates a Blackboard section for every course each semester; faculty simply activate the course within the platform to make it available to their students. During the 2016-17 academic year, nearly 2,000 faculty used the Blackboard platform for more than 3,400 course sections.

ITS joined forces with the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL) in the development of the University’s new Teach Online Academy. Initial workshops focused on design and pedagogy followed by a series of support resources, including additional workshops and one-on-one consultation. ITS provided instructional development services for 35 professors who participated in online course development activities over the past academic year. As more faculty come to UAlbany with online teaching experience, the Academy expects to make the transition to online teaching increasingly easier.

“Chris Moore’s work with Faculty Technology Resources (FTR) is consummately professional, genuinely collaborative, and highly effective. In our work together to promote and support online and blended learning, Chris has always prioritized the interests of students and faculty first. This year, for the first time, we saw more than 10,000 enrollments in online courses with the majority of those enrolled in the regular academic term. Without the faculty development and other support work done by FTR, we would not have achieved this. Chris is a great colleague and I value our cooperative working arrangement very highly.”

Dr. Peter Shea, Associate Provost for Online Learning & Associate Professor, Educational Theory and Practice and Informatics
SUPPORTING FACULTY AND RESEARCHER SUCCESS (CON’T)

Increased Use of Academic Technologies

- ITS provided faculty with numerous technologies to innovate and enhance the classroom experience. Several of the following examples were used in online, hybrid, and face-to-face classroom environments.

- Technology has revolutionized textbooks, many of which are now in a digital format. Blackboard integrates with digital publications, and an increasing number of publishers are making their materials available electronically. Over the past year, UAlbany faculty using online textbooks were able to incorporate them seamlessly into Blackboard. Quizzes and other information from online textbooks were accessed using clickers, with grades automatically fed back into Blackboard course sections.

- Last year’s Ensemble Video pilot project became a robust, 21st century solution for bringing video into the classroom. Integration with Blackboard made it easy for faculty to add videos to their courses, and for students to access them. More than 150 faculty in 45 academic departments are using Ensemble Video.

- Increased use of VoiceThread, a tool that replaced text-based comments with videos. Far more engaging than reading text, the use of videos more closely replicated the interactions that take place in face-to-face courses, even for those students participating in the online environment.

- ITS installed a studio designed exclusively for faculty to create their own videos. Recording equipment enabled the use of lecture capture for welcome videos, supplemental course materials and much more. Editing software can be used on a PC or a MAC. The studio also implemented the intuitive One Button Solution, a recording tool pioneered by Penn State (http://onebutton.psu/edu).

- Continued use of the “faculty sandbox” in HU 40. This unique space gave faculty an opportunity to test a wide range of technologies, which helped ITS determine which ones should be installed for future use in classrooms across campus.

- The Office of the SUNY Provost and the Innovative Instruction Research Council awarded Julie Cuccio Slichko (ITS) and Elaine Lasda (University Libraries) with a $20,000 grant for their proposal, “A Three-Pronged Course Redesign Program to Incorporate OERs into Online Classes: Instruction, Interaction, Incentive.” This competitive grant was open to SUNY faculty and support staff across all academic disciplines. The award is a wonderful example of the way ITS partners with other entities on campus—in this case, the University Libraries—in support of our faculty.

“The University Libraries are pleased to have partnered with ITS on many projects and initiatives over the years. Such projects include the establishment of the Information Commons in all three libraries, collaboration on developing services that support the University’s learning management system, partnering on the migration to a state-of-the-art data center, and much more. The University Libraries value our relationship with ITS as we offer increased and better services to the University community in support of teaching, learning, and research, and look forward to new possibilities.”

- Rebecca Mugridge, Dean and Director, University Libraries
Support for Research
The use of technology to support faculty research continued to grow. Storage increased by 100 percent for research initiatives, consuming approximately 300 terabytes and more than 50 million files. ITS assisted numerous faculty members across the lifecycle of their research projects, from writing grant proposals to the setup and test of new equipment, to repurposing resources when projects were completed.

“Dr. Mary Beth Winn (research professor emerita, French Studies), recipient of the Three Voices Grant Program from the University’s Emeritus Center, reached out to me about creating a website dedicated to Parisian publisher Anthoine Vérard (1485-c. 1513). With the help of Louis-Gabriel Bonicoli (volunteer research staff, French Studies), we quickly determined that the complexity of Winn’s vast data required a database to make complex searches possible and accept new materials easily. I contacted the Office of the CIO, who quickly put me in touch with the Academic & Research Computing Center (ARCC). Within a few weeks, the database was up and running. It was a real pleasure to work with the people of the Academic & Research Computing Center (Brian Macherone, Anne Shelton, and Eric Warnke), who translated our needs into actions.”

Frederic Meni, Coordinator, Center for Language and International Communication

“Increasingly, ITS helped faculty bring research into the classroom, providing their students with hands-on experience. Student access to research clusters and high-performance computing methods was a high priority for the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS). The integration of sophisticated technologies into the classroom enriched the learning environment, and dramatically improved the student experience.

“The good old days where departments bought their own hardware, and managed and supported their own computing environments, are over. Such facilities are no longer financially viable or scalable in terms of the performance and capacity needed to handle today’s large, and continually growing, research activities and student populations. Our partners at ITS stepped up and proactively collaborated with CEAS to deploy a number of state-of-the-art data services and solutions, including an HPC graphics accelerator enabled cluster, and a new remote access, development environment for students in our computer organization and architecture courses.”

Dr. Randy Moulic, Associate Dean and Chair, Computer Science

“The University at Albany is home to the New York State Mesonet. Established in April 2014 by the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) and operated by the University at Albany with support from FEMA, the New York State Mesonet (NYSM) was founded to facilitate improved frequent, local weather monitoring and forecasting of high impact weather. The NYSM is the nation’s first statewide, three-dimensional weather network, with subnetworks of standard, vertical profiler, surface energy budget, and snow observations. Data from the network provides more accurate, more reliable weather information to aid public safety and economic resiliency.

“As our department has grown, so has our scientific computing and data storage needs. Our in-house IT staff has a very productive relationship with the Academic and Research Computing Center, as well as with the NetApp administrators within ITS. This symbiotic relationship will continue to play an essential role in the educational and research missions of DAES.”

Dr. Chris Thomcroft, Full Professor and Chair, Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Science.
SUPPORTING BUSINESS SUCCESS

ITS worked closely with the University’s Enrollment Management team on many initiatives to streamline the admissions process. Over the past year, work began to implement Slate, a holistic admissions relationship management system. Slate provides a modern, seamless admissions process by managing all inquiries, prospects, and admissions processing from application intake, materials collection, application reading and decision processing. This streamlined system has revolutionized and radically improved the admissions process and student experience.

“The Registrar’s Office is extremely fortunate to have the support of ITS to assist in making continuous improvements for our students, faculty, staff and alumni while paving the way for new efficiencies and services across the campus. Every unit in ITS has contributed in some way to our success. Many thanks for sharing your time and talents to move the Registrar’s Office forward.”

Karen Chico Hurst, University Registrar

Established by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in 2017, the Excelsior Scholarship is New York State’s newly launched tuition-free degree program, which strives to make college more affordable. ITS was part of a planning team that worked very hard over the summer to implement UAlbany’s enrollment and financial aid offices for the program, which will continue to expand over the next two years. The University at Albany worked swiftly to implement the program, receiving recognition for its efforts from both State University of New York System Administration and the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation.

ITS partnered with many administrative units on campus to support the business needs of the institution. Working closely with these offices, ITS was able to help solve problems, find solutions, and celebrate success. Keeping efficiency in mind, ITS was able to leverage many of our existing assets to address emerging needs.

A good example of this was the development of the Sexual and Interpersonal Violence Prevention and Response Course (SPARC) designed to ensure compliance with Title IX requirements. The federal government requires that certain populations, such as student athletes, complete sexual awareness training prior to participating in collegiate sports. While there are several third-party compliance packages, ITS worked with Chantelle Cleary, Assistant Vice President for Equity and Compliance and Title IX Coordinator, and the SUNY Research Foundation, to develop a training program using Blackboard. Funded through a special grant from the Department of Education, this open access program is now in use at several SUNY and CUNY institutions. While it is still in the early stages of development, the program positions UAlbany as a leader in raising awareness and maintaining compliance with the federal government across the entire SUNY System. Designed to integrate with PeopleSoft, the program will pilot with a group of students in the coming year.

Several initiatives focused on increased efficiencies and other improvements. Here are a handful of examples:

- Changes to the University's Digital Measures program made it easier than ever for the Office of Communications and Marketing to access information on faculty experts. With just a few clicks of the mouse, information can be easily obtained from faculty profiles, highlighting the many talents and accomplishments of our faculty to a worldwide audience.
- ITS worked closely with Human Resources Management to improve recruit-to-hire practices and the internal promotion process.
- Continuous work with the University Police Department provided that unit with technical resources needed in support of campus safety.
- The implementation of the new Gate Link system, a wireless program that scans tickets for entry to sporting events, provided Athletics with start-of-the-art technology for admitting fans into our facilities.
- ITS assisted Facilities Management with moving their building management systems into the University Data Center.
- ITS completed the transition of Oracle databases from physical hardware to virtual servers. This change extended the high availability benefits of virtualization, and dramatically reduced the time required to spin up a new database server.

In keeping with the University’s sustainability principles, ITS assisted several departments in reducing their use of paper:

- Financial Aid for Students documentation
- Disability Services request documentation
- Articulation Agreements & other Senior Level Documents
- HRM1 HR Personnel Changes documentation
- President’s Attendance Request Form documentation
- Research Division Signatory Authority documentation
def _operation(operation):
    if operation == "MIRROR_Y":
        mirror_mod.use_x = False
        mirror_mod.use_y = True
        mirror_mod.use_z = False
    elif operation == "MIRROR_Z":
        mirror_mod.use_x = False
        mirror_mod.use_y = False
        mirror_mod.use_z = True

    #selection at the end - add back the deselected mirror modifier object
    mirror_ob.select = 1
    modifier_ob.select = 1
    bpy.context.scene.objects.active = modifier_ob
    print("Selected" + str(modifier_ob))  # modifier ob is the active ob
    mirror_ob.select = 0
    done = bpy.context.scene.objects.active
    bpy.data.objects.remove(done)
SUPPORTING BUSINESS SUCCESS (CON’T)

“ITS has shown us over the last year that they are dedicated to helping our office modernize and automate our processes. We’re working with them collaboratively on several projects in support of this effort.”

Kate Thies, Assistant Director of Professional Services

The University Data Center

The University Data Center continued to play an important role in ITS and across the University. This past year saw increased occupancy in the new facility from internal and external entities. ITS continues to solicit new tenants based on available capacity with an eye towards improvements in physical access control and security. Biometric hand scanners in mechanical galleries, swipe access for secured areas, and the ability to track use are among the past year’s security improvements.

Supporting Organizational Success

ITS took many steps over the past year to streamline internal operations and refine our organization to better reflect the way we work. We are very proud of what we have accomplished, and look forward to continuing to improve our service to the University.

• Established an IT Executive Committee for governance. This committee, composed of the University vice presidents, provides ITS with invaluable guidance on prioritizing projects and improving our service delivery.
• Initiated a model for data governance. While still in its early stages, this group will assist ITS in formulating a strategy to leverage, utilize and protect our valuable collection of institutional data.
• A new work management system is being rolled out across all of ITS. By ensuring that all requests enter via our Service Desk, ITS is developing a new service model that allows us to respond quickly to all requests, incidents or problems in a transparent manner.
• Internal reorganization and restructuring to facilitate greater collaboration and interaction across ITS staff.
• Developing meaningful multi-year budget plans based on staff, capacity, growth planning and service demand. Working with campus leadership to establish practical budget plans.

• Conducted the first-ever ITS Customer Satisfaction Survey. Referenced earlier in this report, this survey offered ITS valuable feedback from students, faculty and staff on the services we provide to the campus community. The information gathered is playing a key role in the development of the ITS strategic framework, prioritizing our projects and services—both with our Executive IT Committee and within our organization, preparing our institutional assessment program, and on-going efforts to improve service delivery. Going forward, this information may also influence budgeting and other resource allocations.

Looking Ahead

As exciting as the past year has been, the future is even brighter. Several initiatives with tremendous promise were introduced in 2016-17. Because they are in the early stages of development, we have not included them as accomplishments. In order to provide a flavor of what is to come in 2017-18, we offer these highlights:

• The Educational Technology Center (ETC) is a central hub designed to fuse technology, pedagogy and content knowledge to support excellence in teaching and learning while promoting academic transformation. Working with several campus groups, the ETC will serve as a leader and partner in the use of technology for teaching and learning initiatives across the University. The facility will operate under the leadership of Chris Moore, director of the new Educational Technology Center. The ETC is located in LC 27 and is open to all University faculty.
• ITS’ Research IT Group has been renamed the Academic Research Computing Center (ARCC, or ARC2). Located in the Information Technology Building (ITB), the group will continue providing support throughout the research lifecycle under the leadership of Director Brian Macherone. ITS will soon be hiring additional staff to develop new services, including data visualization and modeling and statistical analysis. The expansion of this service will enable faculty to bring the power of sophisticated computational resources into the classroom experience.
• ITS will be providing Qualtrics, a software package used for data collection and analysis, to all students, faculty and staff. This tool will support and encourage undergraduate and graduate research.
• The IT Executive Committee, representing the ITS governance process, is expected to mature and provide greater input into the process of project prioritization and alignment with institutional goals and decision-making.
• Expect more improvements to ITS services based on feedback from students, faculty and staff collected in the ITS Satisfaction Survey, along with additional assessment measures.
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