Bates College
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Library Annual Reports

Information and Library Services

1996

Information Services Annual Report, 1995-96

Bates College

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MEMO

To: Martha Crunkleton
From: ISMT
Re: Annual Report 95-96
Date: June 4, 1996

Our annual report for FY95/96 is attached. While we think we have hit the high spots of the year, the report is not closely edited, primarily due to Library renovations and BatesCard implementation. We hope it will still serve as a useful document and will afford us the opportunity to discuss priorities for the coming year in the near future.

Information Services
1995 - 1996 Annual Report

II. Accomplishments

Physical facilities improvements:

-Completed the campus network expansion to all student dorm rooms. The College now has over 1500 nodes actively supported by Information Services on the campus wide network.

- Designed and implemented enhanced network dialin service to allow Internet access for Faculty, Staff and Students from off campus.

- Upgraded Mithras and Ladd servers to DEC Alpha chip technology providing more memory and greater speed for the services residing on these servers. Began investigating running the old Mithras "clustered" with Abacus to improve support for student and faculty services.

-Upgraded three Vines servers to support additional network services.

-Planned with the Math Department, and implemented a grant for a new teaching lab in Hathorn.

- Began assisting in the design and implementation of two additional electronic classrooms for teaching (Foreign Language Lab, Library electronic teaching classroom). Participated in the design of the electronic requirements and teaching spaces in the new academic building.

- Worked with Library on plans for Ladd renovations and redesign of space, with major emphasis on expanded network access.

- Began process of upgrading faculty desktop machines. Surveyed faculty to determine needs and placed orders.

-Planned and implemented improvements in training space in Coram 06.

-Planned and implemented conversion to office landscape furniture in Lane for the Integrated Applications Group.

-Planned and implemented conversion of storage space in the barn at 110 Russell to accommodate staff and network testing area.

-Planned modification of Pettigrew User Assistance Group area to accommodate additional staff and expand the Faculty Resource Area, eliminating the 121 Pettigrew training area. Training sessions will be held in 06 Coram or the Bibliographic Instruction room being built in the Library.

 Service enhancements:

- Banner Alumni has been successfully implemented and we are on target for the implementation of Student this summer and initial components of Financial Aid for the fall. The Human Resource module is slated to begin in February of 1997.

- The Banner system has been successfully upgraded to the 2.0.x release and also to Oracle 7. The new Simplified Data Access modules will be implemented by August which should increase our ability to provide reporting to our College constituents.

- The "BatesCard" project is on target for Phase I implementation in August and September. This project will provide new ID cards for the Bates community and introduce banking services, debit services, long distance calling services and access services on the card.

 - The HelpDesk successfully orchestrated the 'blitz' for student network connections in the fall.

-Set up SCO Unix server to provide access to PsycInfo and WaterResources Abstracts for Colby Bates Bowdoin Consortium.

-Improved process for handling data sets in support of academic research.

-Developed and implemented 'Bates Menu', the first phase in an easy to install and navigate package of supported network software.

-Completed testing for expansion of network software services for College constituents including EudoraPro for e-mail and Meeting Maker for scheduling. The target for implementing these services is Fall Semester, once new staff in the HelpDesk, Support, and Training areas have become familiar enough with the packages to provide support for them.

-Assisted with technology lunch series to provide a forum for faculty to share ideas about incorporating technology into teaching.

Personnel:

-The IS organization is making slow but steady progress in re-forming as a service focused organization. We have created an organizational structure designed to emphasize support and are in the process of hiring additional staff to strengthen areas that have been weak or understaffed in IS. The organization is divided into three groups; User Assistance, Integrated Applications, and Infrastructure Support. We anticipate staff will be fully aligned and physically located with their primary group in July.

IV. Strengths

- ISMT is continuing to develop into a group that can take the best advantage of the strengths of its members. This year we have grappled with some of the fundamental difficulties of managing in a team in an honest and straightforward manner. This foundation will enable us to be more effective in developing the IS organization into the service oriented group that we envision.

V. Obstacles

-The obstacle of different physical locations for the IS groups continues to have major significant consequences for the IS organization. Helping staff in IS to view the organization as a whole requires monumental effort on the part of the ISMT, whereas co-location would communicate this concept easily.

-Significant demands are being placed on the organization to provide extended hours of direct coverage, including an operations function. We have not been able to allocate staff to accommodate these requests without serious degradation of service during business hours.

-Bates College lacks a clear process for setting College-wide priorities for technology support. This has the effect of IS managers and staff being pulled and tugged in a multitude of directions. Projects this year that have cropped up and placed significant demands on IS resources are the BatesCard and banking projects. In addition, meetings of user constituents such as the Banner printing group get de-railed as individuals or departments try to use these groups to get their individual or departmental needs met. IS managers are approached multiple times by individuals trying to advocate for their individual or departmental needs. In addition, if IS managers indicate that a particular request may not be a high priority, individuals often go to the next hierarchical level to get administrators at the vice-presidential level to exert pressure. Negotiating these requests repeatedly is extremely time consuming, and often has the effect of making IS managers look unsupportive and obstructionist. We would like to find other ways to work with our constituencies to develop a common understanding of IS priorities and what they support.

VII. 96-97 Goals

Physical facilities goals:

- Plan for the upgrades for administrative staff desktop computers to support the GUI version of the Banner product and evaluation of additional server support for the GUI version of Banner.

-Install the first group of faculty desktop machines, and begin the process to upgrade the next group.

-Upgrade labs and classrooms; Libbey 1, PsychLab, teaching spaces in Olin, Carnegie and Pettigrew.

-Continue planning support for electronic aspects of new academic building.

-Upgrade the phone switch to accommodate new numbers in the Library and new academic building.

Service goals:

-Establish improved HelpDesk and training services by completing hiring process for staff in the User Assistance Group.

-Implement new phone service with new long distance carrier, including outgoing long distance, and college-wide calling card capabilities.

- Complete the initial implementation for all five modules of the Banner product.

- Upgrade to use of "referential integrity" in the Oracle 7 module followed by upgrade to release 2.1.x of Banner.

- Evaluate the Banner World Wide Web interface, the Innovative Interfaces World Wide Web interface and examine view of network services and resource through the CWIS. Explore the need for, and develop different "views" of information for different constituencies.

-Promote the use of technology in teaching, particularly though implementing the Mellon grant for technology use in language teaching.

-Plan for improved support for multimedia creation and use.

-Integrate support for the renovated electronic areas of the Library in a way that minimizes confusion for the user.

-Continue support for BatesCard implementation.

-Develop operational improvements in the batch environment and for printing services.

-Integrate Windows 95 into the environment.

-Be prepared to address high priority unforeseen projects.

Personnel and processes:

-Re-institute more frequent meetings with DOF/VPAA.

-Continue to define the IS organization and communicate responsibilities with each other and our constituencies.

-Work with personnel and pay equity group on pay equity issues.

-Implement "conversations" process and continue to explore options for describing and evaluating work.

-Develop improved processes for communicating with constituencies about IS priorities.