Integrated Technologies
Strategic Plan 2010 -2015
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In 2008 Empire State College initiated a participatory process that resulted in a renewed vision, mission and strategic plan for the college, to guide this institution over the next few years. Concurrently, and in conjunction with the spirit and themes of these documents, the Educational Technology Committee (ETC) produced a vision statement and strategic plan specific to technology issues for the college through 2015. [1]

**Overview of the Plan**

This document represents ETC’s work to fulfill its primary charge: to “shape the overall vision and strategy of all educational technology” at the college. The ETC as a governance committee is further charged to play an advisory role on the creation and implementation of more specific, actionable steps to achieve the stated goals and recommended strategies in this plan[2]. The ETC and the Office of Integrated Technologies (OIT) will establish a process to jointly consider how tactical steps are prioritized and enacted.

The ETC organized this plan in parallel to the key themes and strategies set out in the college-wide Strategic Plan document. The committee identified how technology relates to each theme, and what intended technology outcomes relate to each strategic goal. Both the Technology Vision Statement and the college’s Vision 2015 provided a framework to map Empire State College’s communal desires for the future with dynamic strategies and recommended actions that will guide specific tactical steps for implementing this technology strategic plan. Throughout the development process, the committee received helpful feedback from across the college, and incorporated suggested revisions to the final plan.

**Mission**

SUNY, Empire State College uses innovative, alternative, and flexible approaches to higher education that transcend time, place, and ways of learning to transform people and communities by providing rigorous programs that connect individuals’ unique and diverse lives to their personal learning goals.

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1 According to the new bylaws, ETC is charged to “act for the college to shape the overall vision, strategy, and direction of all educational technology and technology policies implemented at the college. ETC shall play an advisory role in planning, prioritizing, and assessing the academic viability of all academic technologies and technology policies as they relate to the academic program of the college.”

2 According to the bylaws, ETC plays an advisory role in “tactical planning and assessment of the academic viability of all academic technologies” at the college.
Pursuing studies and/or being part of the larger Empire State College community requires each learner and each employee to be able to fully access our online systems, and the college is committed to fully supporting the technology needs and requirements of the Empire State College community of students, faculty, professionals and staff.

**Technology Vision for 2015**

In 2015, Empire State College’s technology is fully integrated and embedded in the core educational mission of mentoring, learning, and scholarship.

Technology supports and enhances learning, mentoring, and working environments with the common purpose of helping students to achieve their goals. Technology is available and supported for all students, faculty, professionals and staff in order to:

- Provide an effective and efficient means of communication for all stakeholders, committees and working groups of the college
- Provide access to diverse learning opportunities through diverse learning modalities
- Encourage the development of creative and new learning opportunities
- Enhance the unique mentoring processes at the college
- Network learners and mentors with each other and a global community of learners
- Link to diverse learning resources internally and externally
- Preserve and share the accumulated intellectual capital of the college
- Understand and respect issues of intellectual property and creative commons
- Enhance scholarship and professional development, including research, publications and creative works
- Enable and sustain innovation and scholarship related to our mission.
- Collect and share assessments of student and program outcomes using mixed methods and multiple data types to ensure consistent quality
- Integrate databases and systems to inform college decision making and processes
- Ensure accessibility for the whole college community, including those with disabilities
- Support collaborative governance deliberations and decision-making

**Commitments**

In light of rapidly changing social and economic circumstances, and the pace of new innovations in technology, the college’s technology needs are reassessed regularly including input from end-users. Processes are developed so that the institution is both flexible and responsive to these dynamics, always
considering issues of diversity, diverse learning modalities, and access. Training resources are available to fully realize the potential and power of existing and newly adopted technologies. Our technology system provides for both seamless integration and customizable systems allowing each employee and student to interface with the college in logical and personalized ways. Technology supports an enduring bond between alumni and the college by providing access to evidence of students’ learning accomplishments throughout their academic and professional lives. Therefore in 2015, Empire State College’s technology system is robust, secure and user-friendly, and allows employees and learners to have full access regardless of location.

**Strategic Position**

The college has a special stake in the quality of its information technologies, systems, and services. The combined, distinctive characteristics at Empire State College set the goals for intensive use of information technologies. Multiple locations and online and blended instruction, commitment to individualized learning for all students, and dedication to making education accessible and successful for busy adults are among the principal factors defining the technology goals of the college.

Empire State College has considerable strengths in information systems for delivery of different variations of online learning: whole courses, online supplements to in-person instruction, and library and other general informational resources. The college has also developed extensive and sophisticated information systems to support the individualization of learning, from prior learning assessment through degree planning to narrative assessment of student success.

The college's Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 sets objectives for which technology support will be vital. Enrollment growth of five percent annually, for example, will require improvements in outreach and recruitment largely via the web. Focus on student retention and maintenance of academic quality will necessitate tracking of student experiences and timely interventions when difficulties become apparent. Information systems, data, and faculty and staff skills will need to be aligned with the strategic objectives of the college. They need to be well managed and adequately funded. They also need to be durable yet amenable to rapid evolution.

The college will need to rely on strategic partnerships to meet its technology objectives. Students in regions of New York where Internet access is not strong will need access to increased bandwidth. The
increasing importance of mobile technologies will require the college's information systems to keep pace with transformation in technology platforms--and for this it depends on the vendors of its principal systems. SUNY resources, particularly for library source contracts and multimedia delivery infrastructure will grow in importance.

Strategic vision in information technologies--and in the integration of technologies--is the key to technology planning for Empire State College. Already, many objectives, needs, innovations, and initiatives are in play. Selective focus, prioritization, and effective management will be needed and will depend importantly on a clear view of the college's primary goals for the coming years.

Integrated Technologies Strategic Plan for 2010-2015

THEME A – The College as an innovative, learning organization

A1: Doing better by our learners: learner success

Related Technology Goal:

Investigate, use and evaluate technology tools to support multiple modes of learning, and student support services.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Identify, develop and adopt technologies to support mentored learning, online study, classroom instruction, study groups, and blended approaches including residencies.

   In order to support the college’s mission, time and resources should be devoted to all modes of learning and instructional methods, with a special emphasis on blended approaches for studies offered within and across centers.

   Action #1: Establish a learning object repository and other shared resources for use across the college.

   Instructional resources developed within college centers and programs should be available throughout the college. A repository for storage, organization, and retrieval of digital objects needs to be established and sustained as a core resource for learning. This repository will require two kinds of development: a technical system and a set of policies and protocols.
Action #2: Explore the possibilities of using alternative LMSs or other collaborative
technologies; open education resources (including e-textbooks) for online and blended
studies; and expanded ways of communicating with students.

Two questions need to be addressed. Is the current LMS the optimal product of its kind to
be using at the college? Is any LMS sufficient to provide the technologies the college
wants to use in support of learning? A variety of reasons make this re-assessment timely:
the number of choices among commercially-provided systems is decreasing--while their
costs are rising; open-source alternatives are proving successful; interest in academic
collaboration is not limited to participants in particular courses--which are the units of
organization in LMS systems; the set of communication and collaboration tools available
is larger and more diverse than that assembled by any LMS provider. Using open
educational resources should be expanded as a means of reducing costs for students.

Action #3: Explore means to facilitate student connections with each other. Enable
student development of educationally supportive communications, knowledge-
sharing, and shared experience in learning.

The proliferation of technologies termed Web 2.0, social networking, and open learning
provide new possibilities for collaborative work. The college needs an initiative, and
subsequently a regular process, to explore, evaluate, selectively adopt, and then support
tools to meet these objectives.

Action #4: Improve student access to knowledge about ESC faculty and staff, including
information about their roles in instruction and their areas and topics of academic
expertise.

Create an online, searchable resource that includes faculty contact information,
biographies, and teaching and research interests. This access will make it easier for
students to find faculty with interests and capabilities that match their interests and with
whom they might wish to work.

Action #5: Enable access to college instructional and administrative resources on mobile
technology platforms.

Today, academic, support and administrative work takes place in many locations outside
college facilities and occurs throughout most hours of the day. The college needs to
enable ubiquitous access to IT resources needed for those activities.

2. Develop flexible, accessible information resources for student support.

Given the distributed nature of the college and the multiple modalities from which students enter,
access, and utilize the resources, staff, and learning environment of the college, a robust and
user friendly database which works with existing college data collection systems needs to be
adopted. Currently there are multiple systems used by faculty, professionals, and staff to access
student data and provide support to our learners. However, these systems often do not
communicate with each other in ways that make sense for end users (students, mentors,
instructors, professionals, and support staff) and often make workloads more cumbersome and
time consuming than they need to be. Additionally, these systems do not take into account the
multiple points of contact students have with the employees of the college who provide all manner
of student support services ranging from record keeping and communication to direct instruction
and individualized support. Identification of the overlapping and unique ways in which all
members of the college community support students and finding ways to enhance communication.
and collaboration between them to promote best practices, reduce workload, and enhance student support should hold the highest priorities in the adoption of databases for student support.

Action #1: Develop or acquire software solutions that can address needs in student services, academic support and retention.

Key stakeholders in providing student services, academic support and retention should discuss current software solution evaluations to address student needs. Information should be made available as part of the Technology Resources site for faculty and professionals. The focus should be on a team holistic approach to supporting students throughout their career at Empire State College.

Action #2: Ensure optimal functionality and user-friendliness for student support tools. Solicit and collect design input from stakeholders, and monitor and act on feedback from stakeholders once those solutions are in place.

The college has numerous online resources in this category but they are not integrated - some need further development, while others are not as comprehensive in functionality as they should be. Additional tools and resources will be needed in particular to upgrade efforts in services, support, and retention.

Action #3: Provide feedback loops for constant measurement of student success.

Faculty and college personnel charged with management of student success and retention should collaboratively draft comprehensive definitions of student success in order to design appropriate feedback loops. These should include feedback not only from a mentor perspective, but also from instructors (tutors), from academic support/student services, from other professionals and staff as well as from students themselves. Ideally, the process of supporting students should be self-documenting with regard to success of the college’s initiatives and the suitability of the information systems used for those purposes.

3. Ensure that students can easily identify and access technology resources and services available to them.

Action #1: Assess and leverage student owned technology in order to enrich learning.

At admission, create process of identifying student technical skills, access to and ownership of computers and other technical devices useful for college work. New students should be pointed toward appropriate training and support resources. New technologies brought into use at the college should make best advantage of skills, software, services, and equipment prevalent among the students.

Action #2: Partner with alternate sites across the state to provide students with more convenient online access points.

An ETC working group is exploring the potential of partnering with alternate sites across the state (e.g., hospitals, community colleges, county offices, businesses) as technology access points for ESC students, particularly those in rural regions. This working group will consider whether we might need formal agreements, and what the partnerships might entail.
Action #3: Ensure that the college’s technology accommodates students who have low-bandwidth access to the Internet.

Software and services need to be chosen and managed for efficiency over low-bandwidth network connection, such as dial-in. The performance of applications provided by the college over the Internet need to be monitored and managed for successful use by students with less than optimal network access.

4. Support students’ fluency in information technology as a means of supporting lifelong learning and career development.

Action #1: Ensure that students have adequate skills with information technology, and access to required resources.

Develop a means for assessing information literacy skills appropriate for study at ESC. Develop a program of instruction and support for those whose skills are not adequate.

Action #2: Prioritize and fund library resources and tools to support fluency in information technology for all members of the college community.

Action #3: Expand upon the e-portfolio pilot or similar kind of electronic repository of student work to aid in students’ connection with technology and their educational growth and development.

A program to establish the place of portfolio in the educational practices of the college is required to provide the rationale, methods, and priority of development. ESC’s individualized approach to education is a natural fit with the concept of a student portfolio. The portfolio would meet multiple objectives: a record of continuing growth, source of information about student experiences, and a life-long evolving dossier of accomplishments.

Action #4: Identify key employer needs with information technology and leverage the college’s career services to support current students and to keep closer connections with alumni.

ESC students should become proficient with technologies used in today’s workplace. Various external communities, such as employers and alumni, should be consulted to assist in identifying technologies proficiencies they need in the workforce.

A2: Doing better by each other: institutional effectiveness.

Related Technology Goal:

Develop a plan for an institution-wide communication and information environment that is dynamic, easily accessible, and seamlessly integrated.

Recommended Strategies:
1. Provide appropriate technical resources and support to all members of the ESC community, including those with special needs and disabilities, so they can successfully engage in learning, work and activities at the college.

   Action #1: Provide an efficient troubleshooting process to address immediate user problems.

   Develop a unified service that is able resolve a substantial proportion of problem reports at first contact and that ensures escalation and prompt follow-through for those that it cannot resolve. Hours of coverage will need to be extended in evenings and weekends.

   Action #2: Develop just-in-time training resources, online documentation, "how to" multimedia, and a knowledge base to enable direct access to information to assist in troubleshooting.

   Multiple modes of support will be necessary to address the growing use of IT in the activities of the college and the reality of 24x7 learning.

   Action #3: Develop a plan that addresses the ergonomics of the college’s work stations.

   As the college community increases the time and pace of its technology use, attention should be given to how human health and welfare are affected by prolonged periods in front of computers, and the multitasking demands of typical workdays.

2. Strengthen the college community through uniformly-distributed technology that is accessible, easy to use, and seamlessly integrated.

   Action #1: Provide feedback loops for measures of institutional effectiveness.

   Quality of service depends on the ability to observe and measure. Feedback from the college community, the service support center, and systems logs and statistics need to be used to assess IT effectiveness and inform management responses for improvements.

   Action #2: Create a single, high-visibility, authoritative source of information about IT resources available to the college community.

   A comprehensive source of information is needed. At present, there is no single source presenting the IT resources available to the college community. There are multiple, partial sources that are difficult to find. These are not comprehensive. Nor are they up to date. Much useful information is not currently available. An example would be a list of software available. Sites such as the Technology Resource site aimed more specifically to faculty and professionals should be linked to more general information source via the college’s portal. Each community member should direct access to technology information most useful and relevant to their needs.

   Action #3: Ensure that software and services are kept current and compatible in their versions. Implement version changes smoothly; make transitions easy.

   A proactive approach to software version management is needed. Past practices have resulted in lags in software versions and in inconsistencies in versions in use at the same time. Upgrade choices and dates need to be planned, communicated, and implemented with the aim of providing up-to-date functionality and minimizing incompatibilities.
3. Ensure user needs and priorities are reflected in the resource prioritization process.

Action #1: Involve the college community in the IT strategic planning process.

_The college’s 2010-2015 planning process is the optimal occasion for discovery, evaluation, and prioritization of user needs._

Action #2: Ensure that IT services and projects are governed by the 2010-2015 Integrated Technologies plan.

_The college’s IT resources should be planned and managed within the framework of the strategic plan That plan needs to be refreshed and extended annually via a process that solicits input from the college community. Appropriate IT advisory bodies—principally the Educational Technology Committee and the All Systems Group—should assist the Office of Integrated Technologies in collecting and prioritizing user needs and adjusting services and plans accordingly._

4. Support regional centers and programs so they understand the college’s technology priorities, and know how to anticipate and address local needs as they emerge.

Action #1: Coordinate center and program IT usage and IT management with the Office of Integrated Technologies.

_College centers and programs should track the 2010-2015 IT plan and the tactical and project plans that derive from it. Each center and program should have internal processes to gather, assess and prioritize IT needs and coordinate with OIT for support and to contribute to planning updates._

5. Develop comprehensive plans addressing technology infrastructure stability, redundancy, record retention, data and information backup, security, disaster recovery and archiving.

Action #1: Develop tactical plans for each of these topics.

_The fabric of IT service consists of layers of plans, projects, services, and technologies focused on specific objectives. Best practices from the IT world need to be applied to the college’s needs. Each of these needs to be formulated as policy and objectives, framed as a project, implemented and documented._

A3: Developing a culture of innovation, reflection and continuous improvement

_Related Technology Goal:_

Adopt and continually reassess technology that is robust, nimble and meets the varied and changing needs of the college – its learners, faculty, professionals and staff.

_Recommended Strategies:_

1. Utilize a variety of communication tools to support the exchange of ideas and best practices from across the college.
The college has multiple means of communicating with its members but so far has not coordinated them in a master plan. While a very considerable amount of information is communicated, it tends to be disseminated from offices, centers, and programs without substantial coordination or focus. Information tends to be “pushed” more often than it is made available for “pull” on demand from the community. The interactive paradigm enabled by Web 2.0 technologies is not widely used in the college’s communications. The college has an added imperative to communicate extensively with its community via electronic media because of its modes of instruction and its geographical spread. (see C1/2Strategy4#Action#1)

Action #1: Create a baseline of technology needs that supports all Empire’s community members irrespective of location.

While considering both security and budget, the College should adopt a T4 line for all college locations, such that all locations have equal access to college online resources.

Action #2: Increase collaboration and interactive video conferencing capabilities.

The College should expand the capability of ESCNet and other social networking tools, both internal and external. A variety of video conferencing technologies should be readily available and supported at all locations. These might include a menu of choices provided by both free/low cost providers (Skype, tokbox) or with proprietary tools.

Action #3: Establish a new space for sharing governance proceedings in multiple media formats, and link to various online areas so all community members have easy access.

New technology tools can provide the whole college community with a way not only to exchange ideas during committee deliberations, but to keep updated on governance decisions. Web access to the proceedings of governance bodies should be expanded and made easier to find, search, and navigate. Staff supporting those governing groups will need to post and manage the information appearing in these spaces.

2. Gather and share data on student learning experiences in order to regularly assess and improve curriculum in all areas of study.

The college exists to serve its students; technology may help or hinder the process. Prior to defining next-generation requirements we should first evaluate the effectiveness of current systems from the user perspective, with the primary voice being that of our students. The evaluation process should be comprehensive and data-driven, merging statistical sampling with observed results.

Action #1: Evaluate student learning experiences from the student perspective.

Conduct a student survey designed to capture the level of student satisfaction with existing technology, identify problem areas and solicit potential solutions. Compare survey results with indirect measures of student success – retention data, enrollment rates, IT help desk reports, etc.

Action #2: Evaluate student learning experiences from the instructor/mentor perspective.

Design and conduct a similar survey for instructors and mentors. This population would have greater familiarity with course delivery systems but be potentially less sensitive than student stakeholders towards the course outcomes that serve as an index of student performance.
3. Ensure that the technological components of the college’s learning environment promote innovation in research, modes of learning and student support services.

Technology is continually evolving. Emergent capabilities present opportunities for innovation in research, pedagogy and support services, but only to the extent that those opportunities are recognized and incorporated into the technology planning cycle. Hardware and software should be continuously renewed with next-generation systems offering greater speed, capability and performance.

Action #1: Launch an interactive technology resource site specific to the state of technology at the college, and the emerging trends that impact practices and policies.

In light of the need for a comprehensive source of information about technology across the college, the Educational Technology Committee established a Technology Resource Subcommittee, charged to collaboratively conceptualize and plan an interactive information and resource site for the college’s faculty. The aim of this site is to provide access to technology information and tools that enhance learning, scholarship and communication at the college. This subcommittee will be comprised of representatives from ETC, and selected volunteers from across the college. The subcommittee will work collaboratively with various centers and offices, including the Center for Mentoring and Learning, to ensure that the site adds an effective feedback loop on relevant technology issues and needs across the college.

Action #2: Solicit user input for technological improvements from students, faculty and staff.

Interactive exchanges and user input can be solicited via a virtual “suggestion box” on the Technology Resources site. The Office of Integrated Technologies should designate a team to review inputs and propose how the most promising ideas can be put into action.

Action #3: Match expanded capabilities with equally robust user training.

Technology is only as valuable as we are prepared to use it, and the key to that is training. Training should be regularly conducted across the college through a combination of in-person and distance learning instruction conducted by knowledgeable instructional technologists and systems designers. The end user should have an intentional role in training and adoption of new technologies; a “feedback” loop should be set up to inform both the training process and the assessment of the effectiveness of new or changed technology.

Action #4: Assess and continually update accessible online resources to support academic research across disciplinary areas.

Library services should initiate collaborative discussions with AOS members from across centers and programs in order to determine current and future needs for online resources that support academic research at the college.

4. Provide faculty, staff and students with technology tools and skills that support their own lifelong learning and career development.
Action #1: Faculty collaboratively define their roles and rewards in experimenting with new technology in their teaching, mentoring and research.

The Areas of Study groups should address this issue when they convene, and communicate their needs and desires to ETC and OIT so that the required time and support can be built into the technology planning process on a regular basis. Faculty will also have the benefit of up-to-date information via the Technology Resource Site, which will add to the AOS discussions.

Action #2: Professional Employees with their supervisors and any peer affinity groups collaboratively define their roles and rewards in experimenting with new technology in their professional job responsibilities and any related project management, teaching and research.

The Professional Employees (PE) of Empire State College are not a homogeneous group. With few exceptions, each PE in CDL and the Regional centers has a separate role/function from the other PEs in the same center. The individualized nature of the PE positions in specialized programs and within the Coordinating Center should also be noted. However, due in large part to the Center staffing model, across centers and programs, there are often affinity groups for PEs who are Coordinators of Student Services, Directors of Academic Review, Directors of Academic Support, Outreach & Recruitment, etc. As appropriate, affinity groups and the PE community should address the roles and rewards in experimenting with new technology so that the required time and support can be built into their performance plan and workload considerations can be made. The PEs should begin these conversations when they convene in multiple venues and communicate their needs and desires to ETC and OIT so that the required time and support can be built into the technology planning process on a regular basis.

Action #3: Provide faculty and professionals and support staff with regular periods of professional development release time/training in order to update their knowledge and skills in new technologies.

The Professional Obligation Task Force – now reconstituted as the Provost’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Workload and Work-Life Issues – should consider the impact of regular training and professional development needed to keep pace with technology in order to conduct the business of the college, develop innovative learning opportunities, and support faculty research agendas and creative endeavors. Appropriate teams within OAA, OIT and CML should consult with ETC and AOS chairs regarding the most efficient use of resources to provide this support.

5. **Implement a technology planning cycle to match goals, priorities and resources with emerging technologies.**

Planning cycles make best use of available resources through a disciplined, regular, recurring process. The cycle should be long enough to encompass project phases from concept to development, implementation, and evaluation, but not so long that technology evolves faster than the term of the cycle. User input is most valuable in the earliest stages, when requirements are more flexible and changes less costly.

Action #1: Designate membership in a technology planning group whose members include users as well as technologists.
Appropriate IT advisory bodies—principally the Educational Technology Committee and the All Systems Group—should assist the Office of Integrated Technologies in collecting and prioritizing user needs and adjusting services and plans accordingly. Selected members from the ETC and ASG should focus on translating user input to tactical planning advice for the Office of Integrated Technologies to act upon.

Action #2: Create a planning cycle template.
Identify phases and milestones, processes and products, priorities and tradeoffs. Consider ways to remain flexible so that plans can be quickly shifted, if needed, yet be minimally disruptive to the ongoing work at the college.

Action #3: Prepare and deliver technology planning reports on a quarterly basis.
Ensure governance committees, executive leadership and the college community are kept fully informed of significant issues and developments. Use of the Technology Resource site and the parallel student-centered technology information site should be the main vehicles for up-to-date information of this kind.

THEME B – Sustaining and Managing Growth

B1: Learner Recruitment and Retention

Related Technology Goal:
Adopt an easily accessible, transparent process of identifying, collecting and evaluating data relevant to student academic success and satisfaction.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Develop technologies, information systems, policies and services to identify and recruit prospective students from diverse backgrounds and locations.

The image of a College is dependent on what and how outsiders see us. One major point of interaction with outsiders is our website. Thus, we should make our website, and other such outward facing publications, representative of the diverse nature of the college. Further, prospective students should have easy access to the many ways the college supports diversity.

Action #1: Using current CRM, Orion, the college should identify potential students and gear marketing strategies toward relevant groups and regions.

The lead for this initiative rests with the Office of Enrollment Management. The objectives and methods they decide to pursue should be developed in coordination with the Office of Integrated Technologies.

Action 2: The current website, and other social networking tools, should display the diverse nature of Empire State College and encourage the creation of affinity groups among students, faculty, and staff.
The lead for this initiative rests with the Office of Communications and Government Relations. The objectives and methods they decide to pursue should be developed in coordination with the Office of Integrated Technologies.

2. Develop a comprehensive system of student information delivered via a student-support portal, and ensure easy access.

   Action #1: Develop data-marts (task-specific repositories of data) as a resource for various systems that assist in tracking, analyzing, and managing student success and satisfaction.

   Current tools need to be rewritten and integrated. Databases need to be integrated. A dashboard interface (single, well-organized point of overview and access) needs to be developed for ease of access. The college collects and manages substantial amounts of information about students and needs to make fuller and better coordinated use of it to support students.

   Action #2: Ensure that information resources are accessible regardless of work location. Systems need to be accessible from home and other non-work locations as well as from all college workplaces.

3. Develop information systems to support learner transition to college studies.

4. Align institutional processes to provide seamless, non-duplicated, and accurate entry, storage and movement of student data and information through college systems.

   Given the distributed nature of the college and the multiple modalities from which students enter, access, and utilize the resources, staff, and learning environment of the college, a robust and user friendly database which works with existing college data collection systems needs to be adopted. Currently there are multiple systems used by faculty, professionals, and staff to access student data and provide support to our learners. However, these systems often do not communicate with each other in ways that make sense for end users (students, mentors, instructors, professionals, and support staff) and often make workloads more cumbersome and time consuming than they need to be. Additionally, these systems do not take into account the multiple points of contact students have with the employees of the college who provide all manner of student support services ranging from record keeping and communication to direct instruction and individualized support. Identification of the overlapping and unique ways in which all members of the college community support students and finding ways to enhance communication and collaboration between them to promote best practices, reduce workload, and enhance student support should hold the highest priorities in the adoption of databases for student support.

   Action #1: Design of the T4 portal interface should be developed in unique ways to meet the needs of the individual users and their roles within the college community. (faculty, student, professional, staff, alumni)

   Each user should have the ability to customize his/her homepage on the T4 college portal site in order to address his/her multiple obligations and interests across the college.

B2: Resourcing our growth

Related technology goal:
Prioritize, coordinate and continually reassess technology budgets, tools and personnel in order to anticipate and manage innovative use of educational technologies.

**Recommended Strategies:**

1. **Make innovation in technology a top priority for the college.**

   Action #1: Expand budget for regularly scheduled periods of faculty professional development devoted to updating knowledge and skills in new technologies.

   *Skill and insight are vital to innovation in the uses of technology, enabling the college to benefit fully from the technologies already in place and informing it about new technologies to acquire. Faculty development in the uses of technology requires training and assistance. To date the college has not applied the resources for this development. Faculty vary individually in their knowledge and skills for the technologies they need to use. Faculty as a group need to set and reach standards in IT practice to keep pace with the needs of their disciplines, the college program, and their students.*

   Action #2: Ensure innovation by generating new revenue through grant supported research related to new learning technologies.

   *The college should establish a laboratory or institute to serve as a focal point for innovations in the use of technology to advance learning. In this place, college personnel and resources would be organized to investigate, develop, and adopt innovations. It would be the unit of the college that seeks grant funding, hosts expert collaborators, and builds alliances with other institutions.*

2. **Ensure that technology keeps pace with growth of the college.**

   Action #1: Monitor the growth and development of centers and programs; adjust resource allocations to anticipate and match needs.

   *Some IT resources will need to expand in gradual fashion. Example: equipment for added personnel. Others need to be increased in major steps. Example: additional bandwidth for new applications, such as videoconferencing. Equipment upgrades or replacements should be planned on a reasonable schedule in order that work and productivity are not adversely affected.*

   Action #2: Centers and programs should develop processes to assess their immediate, short and long term needs for technology.

   *Personnel connected with each individual center or program are in the best position to determine their needs for support in terms of technology hardware and software. Each should develop appropriate consultative relationships with their regional instructional designers, ETC representatives, OIT staff and others for planning purposes.*

3. **Continually reassess technology resources in light of changing needs and opportunities.**

   Action #1: Monitor the suitability of IT resources with particular attention to the changing needs of centers and programs and in light of changes in technology or in costs.

   *Technologies and the needs of the college will continue to change. As a consequence, resources will need to be reassessed continually for suitability and quantity. Evolving*
practices of the college will also necessitate review technology resources so they can be adjusted to keep pace.

Action #2: Ensure that IT staff resources grow to keep pace with the reliance of technology delivered instruction, research and services.

Growth in online operations at the college need to be matched by adequate staff count, skills, and organization to provide the human support necessary to obtain the full benefit of technology and to ensure that users of these resources well supported.

Action #3: Create and implement a data security plan.

We must take the necessary precautions to ensure that the any information stored in our databases is secure and protected against unauthorized access. In order to address IT security concerns, the college might consider adding an automated security software program as an additional information source to ensure rapid access to relevant indicators of security compliance.

THEME C - Telling Our Story

C1 Enhancing the profile and reputation of the college
C2 Leveraging our reputation and uniqueness

Related Technology Goal:
Revamp and continually enhance the college’s web presence, interactive networking spaces and other online areas where students, alumni, faculty, professionals and staff can share their stories both internally and externally.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Make web and other online technologies the principal means by which the college communicates with its internal and external constituents.

Action #1: Establish and maintain a highly functional Web presence as the principal means by which the college communicates brand and image.

The college’s web site needs to be substantially modernized and improved to make use of the best current and emerging technologies and practices. A new paradigm of web management and wider participation in creating information resources needs to be developed.

Action #2: Expand multimedia sources to communicate stories of students, faculty and alumni.

Multimedia production resources—facilities, expertise, and technical infrastructure (such as media servers and dedicated network bandwidth will be necessary. During 2009, the college made impressive headway in its use of multimedia in its relations with alumni and
in public relations. Future growth in this capability will depend largely on the unification of efforts by personnel in various centers, programs, and offices.

Action #3: Target the most used web page sets and services within the college web site for informational currency and constant improvement in functionality.

The strategically most important web pages and services need to have priority of attention. The total size of the college’s web site is such that not every page can be continually monitored and improved. Sites whose information changes frequently or whose importance is special need a different standard of care.

2. Leverage outside resources for communicating brand and image, where appropriate.

Action #1: Develop a plan to use existing media outlets and new media sites to share ESC’s contributions in local communities.

Commercial, state-agency, and public outlets should be developed simultaneously and in coordination for college friend-making. In particular, the college will need to participate in local and regional media environments in support of the regional centers. Other environments will be essential for nationwide and international outreach.

Action #2: Consider publicly supporting the Open Education Resources movement.

In order to solidify and expand its reputation as an innovative institution of higher education, the college should strategize its involvement in the work of the Open Educational Resources Foundation and/or similar organizations.

3. Engage domestic and international partners in continuing relationships via technology.

Action: #1: Identify and select partners suited to assist the college in its technology goals.

In 2009 the college joined the Masie Center for innovation in learning. It participates in SUNY partnerships and in various academic and administrative professional societies and institutes. Through its Foundation, the college has access to national and international organizational partners. A concerted strategy to cultivate these relationships to assist in the development of specific programmatic advances in IT would optimize the impressive array of partners available to the college.

3. Provide varied means of communication across the college in order to meet the needs of every member of the college community.

Action #1: Develop communications plans that mobilize technologies and personnel for optimal effect.

The college has multiple means of communicating with its members but so far has not coordinated them in a master plan. While a very considerable amount of information is communicated, it tends to be disseminated from offices, centers, and programs without substantial coordination or focus. Information tends to be “pushed” more often than it is made available for “pull” on demand from the community. The interactive paradigm enabled by Web 2.0 technologies is not widely used in the college’s communications. The college has an added imperative to communicate extensively with its community via
The Planning Process

At the All College meeting in March 2009, ETC as a governance committee received a new charge through an approved change in the college’s bylaws. The committee moved from being purely advisory to the president, to being charged to “act for the college to shape the overall vision, strategy, and direction of all educational technology and technology policies implemented at the college.” Furthermore, the bylaws direct ETC to “play an advisory role in planning, prioritizing, and assessing the academic viability of all academic technologies and technology policies as they relate to the academic program of the college.” As a result, the immediate priorities for the committee were to draft a vision statement and strategic plan for the college, which would serve as a framework for continuing its advisory role in revisiting the technology policies that impact the academic programs across the college. From April to June 2009, the ETC committee began drafting a technology vision statement after consulting the college-wide vision and college’s draft strategic plan. During the governance meeting of late June 2009, the ETC met for an additional day-long retreat to discuss and finalize the draft technology vision statement. At both the summer and fall day-long retreats, several invited guests in key positions responsible for technology use and decision-making joined the committee and contributed to its work. From July through September, the committee’s representatives solicited feedback from all centers and programs, and established a working group to steer the next phase of work – the technology strategic plan.

From summer through winter, 2009, the ETC Committee as a whole consulted a variety of documents on trends in technology in higher education. In addition, the committee consulted the most recent reports generated internally at ESC, including but not limited to the Middle States Self Studies and the OET Status Report on Information Technologies. Taken together, these documents helped frame the issues and possibilities around technology use and adoption at ESC.

In mid October 2009, the ETC met for a second day-long retreat in order to begin the strategic planning process, based on the recently approved technology vision statement. An ETC working group for strategic planning helped steer the discussions and eventual revisions of the draft over the next few months. Between January and March 2010 feedback was solicited from all the centers via the ETC representatives, from OIT via the administrative liaison, and from the Senate, via the committee’s chair. The first revisions were made based on these recommendations, and the ETC brought the revised draft to the All College Meeting in late March 2010. ETC’s presentation, “Empire’s Technology Strategic Plan: The Plan and the Process” was well attended, and participants provided additional comments on the plan.
The committee took these into consideration when completing the final draft which was approved by the ETC on April 21st 2010, during a regular business meeting.

Educational Technology Committee (2009-2010)

Judi Bassini
Jianhao Chen
Anne Cobb
**Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein (co-chair)**
Louise Davis
Susan Forbes
**Diane G. Gal (co-chair)**
Robert Graves
Marlene Hurley
Christopher Jackson
John Lawless
Gavin Lowder
Donna Mahar
Michael Mancini
Gohar Marikyan
Alec Meiklejohn
Irene Norsworthy
Eileen O'Connor
Jim Robinson
Herbert Shapiro
Chansak Suwanchaichinda
Chris Tayko
Tom Warger

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Selected Bibliography