Information Technology

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TechCentral
Marcus White Annex

Annual Report
2022

Division of Information Technology
Central Connecticut State University

From the CIO

I hoped I'd be writing this year's Annual Report without a reference to COVID. Unfortunately, Fall of '21 and Spring '22 had different plans. The Division of Information Technology remained an integral part of technology operations while providing support to the University's COVID19 mitigation strategies. As we enter almost two years with COVID, we began to see a greater return to "normal" and the development of some technology which found their start in COVID but are finding their strategic value within the university community. The success is attributable to a team-based interdisciplinary approach which often blends faculty, administrative staff, teams from facilities, operations, and the University leadership together in a common goal.

In concert with the University Senate Information Technology Committee (ITC), the Center for Teaching and Innovation (CTI), and Information Technology, CCSU has created an activity report to coinside with the final ITC meeting of the year to reflect on the activity of the year. Our thanks go to all of the members of the campus community, the ITC, the CTI, and IT who work in collaboration to support the University's faculty, staff, and students.

In this second annual report an overall, a theme has emerged: "accessibility." Two years into COVID, we know that our technology is accessible to more students, faculty and staff. Together we have:

- Led regional efforts to increase adoption of EDUROAM at local, regional, and statewide locations.
- Increased the pool of loaner laptops for students who need free access to technology.
- Increased the lab space, it's functionality and usability for today's 21st century learners.
- Increased the number of access points on campus which provide ubiquitous network connectivity.
- Increased the use of laptops for faculty and staff which provide crisis portability and accessibility.

It's important to recognize five members of the IT team who will or have retired this year. Combined, they have over 150 years of experience at the University. Some even started and finished their careers at CCSU exceeding 35+ years of service. While they served in different divisions and departments of IT, they were often the backbone of some of the University's greatest accomplishments and successes. CCSU has been a stronger university with their leadership and I hope we can honor their success and accomplishments by building on the foundation they leave us with. Thank you to our retiring IT staff:

- Don Bixler
- Tuan Do
- Mark McGuire
- Chris Simcik
- Lisa Washko

Thank you to the Faculty Senate Information Technology Committee (ITC), the CTI, and the IT Division for their support, leadership, and collaboration this year.

George F. Claffey Jr. Ed.D.

Information Technology Leadership Team

George F. Claffey Jr. Ed.D.
Chief Information Officer

Thomas King
Director of Aux Services

Amy Kullgren
Director of Client Support

Sean McNickle
Director of Technology Operations

Tina Rivera
Associate Director of IT Strategic Initiatives

Chris Simcik
Director, Administrative Technology Services

Stan Styrczula
Director of IT Strategic Initiatives

Terry Thompson
Executive Assistant to the CIO

Center for Teaching & Innovation (CTI)

Christina Robinson
Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies, Research, and Faculty Development

Faculty Senate Information Technology Committee (ITC) Leadership

Kimberly Meyer (Criminology & Criminal Justice)
Chair

Stuart Barnett (English)
Chair

CCSU IT Annual Report Editor
Tina Rivera

Cover Image
CCSU Student Lauren Theriault beta tests CCSU's new XR Lab in the Applied Innovation Hub

Student Success

Digital Postcards with Customer Thermometer

The IT Department partnered with the Student Success Team to implement Customer Thermometer, a digital engagement tool which asks a single, targeted question and offers a one-click response. Three responsive "digital postcards" were created and sent to students to gauge level of confidence in various factors related to retention. Each of the student responses correlated to a temperature rating – gold and green indicated higher satisfaction and lower need for support; yellow and red indicated lower satisfaction and higher need for support. Student Success Team members were assigned to review all responses where a student identified as yellow or red and follow up based on the response driver and any comments to provide necessary support and resources. The system offers a tracking mechanism titled "Closed Loop" to allow staff to track and document their interaction with students who responded with a yellow or red
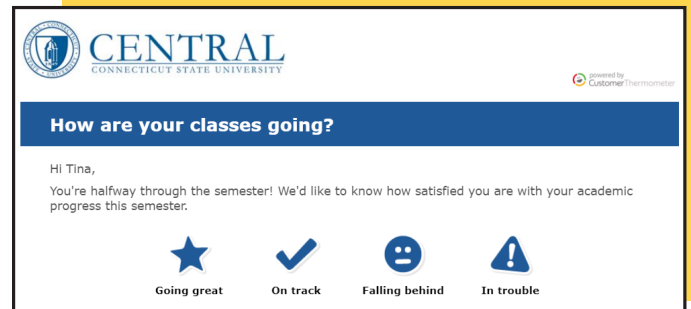
temperature. These digital postcards were sent out over the course of the first 10 weeks of the semester. Response rates ranged from 15% to 32%, with a total of 2348 students responding and a 71% happiness factor. Of these, 680 students received direct support based on their yellow or red temperate rating. Many students expressed their appreciation for being contacted and the follow-up they received.

Ask Kizer

Kizer the chatbot has been invaluable in helping to answer day-to-day questions students have, providing 24/7 answers to their questions. Kizer is available on high traffic web sites such as CentralPipeline, Admissions, Financial Aid,, and Information Technology. To enhance Kizer's knowledge, student workers in various departments were asked to "stump the bot" with questions that may not have been covered during its initial implementation. Their efforts resulted in better student-focused responses. A campaign titled "Ask Kizer" kicked off to promote more use of the chatbot.

"Students don't live their lives on a regular 8-5 schedule. Having their questions answered or being directed to the right spot when they are searching for information is a wonderful addition to our ability to support them."

– John Tully, Interim VP of Student Affairs

TechCentral

IT by the Numbers

650

Faculty & Staff Computer Deployments

250

Remote Computers with Specialized Software

350

Laptops Loaned to Students

300

Peripherals (webcams, monitors, keyboards) Deployed

Located in the Marcus White Annex, TechCentral serves as a technology resource hub for students, faculty, and staff alike. It also houses the newly renovated Copy Center.

Do you need in-person support to configure your mobile devices or help with 2-factor authentication? Much like the Apple store's "Genius Bar" we have staff on hand ready to assist you with connecting to the campuses many technology resources. No appointment necessary!

Students as well as part-time faculty are welcome to use the 40 Windows and 18 Apple computers. Black and white as well as color printing are available, and plans are underway to expand print offerings to include 3D and large format.

Group space areas are available for students to collaborate on class projects.

Have your own laptop or mobile device but need a place to work? TechCentral has great lighting, plenty of space for you to work with robust wi-fi, power, and even a secure way to sanitize and charge your mobile devices. In fact, we have many of these charging stations throughout campus in many of the academic buildings as well as the Student Center and Library.

Increased Technology Availability

The University has many more computers available for student use compared to pre-pandemic:

- Information Technology continues to have several hundred Lenovo laptops available for students to borrow for the academic year. Currently, more than 300 hundred are out on loan.
- We offer a remote computer lab featuring 50 Apple and 200 Dell computers that are accessible from any computer or mobile device providing access to many popular software titles used in our classrooms including SPSS, Matlab, AutoCAD, Visual Studio, Reason, Finale and many more.
- All computer labs in the residence halls reopened in the fall semester. There are nearly 60 computers available, and each lab has printers. Toner is supplied, students just need to provide the paper.
- Additional computers have been added in the Student Center "drum" as well as the 2nd and 4th floors of the Library, both Windows and Mac for student use.

Meet Duane Pierre

Interest in esports expanded during the COVID closure and students could not wait to get back into the Esports Center on campus. This was the perfect opportunity to hire a new varsity esports coach and take our commitment to esports to the next level. Enter Duane Pierre, a CCSU graduate, esports enthusiast, and founder of ParaDYM Academy, Inc. Duane is the perfect fit for CCSU's varsity esports program with his extensive experience in esports coaching, recruiting, mentoring, and overseeing esports programs. Duane has also worked with CCSU's Continuing Education department for several years, bringing esports summer camps to campus. During Duane's first few weeks in his new role as CCSU's varsity esports coach, he made it his mission to engage the students in the Esports Club to get their ideas and input for varsity level esports at CCSU. Duane meets with the team regularly to practice and conduct play-by-play reviews of game strategy, encouraging teamwork and continuous improvement. Duane has connected his team members with academic coaches fom the Academic Center for Student Athletes and asked Counseling and Student Wellness department to meet with the team regarding stress management. His efforts resulted in a cohesive esports varsity team who competed in the Collegiate Overwatch League, winning 3 out of 8 matches over a 4-week period. This is impressive for a newly formed varsity team! Duane is expanding recruiting efforts with plans to have additional varsity teams this fall. We look forward to the future of varsity esports at CCSU with Duane at the helm.

Faculty & Staff Processing Power

1.6M+
Minutes spent in video meetings

19K+
Messages to Kizer the Chatbot

35K+
Microsoft Teams Meetings

"The Computer Science-Honors program was faced with a risk to the program's ABET accreditation status due to the challenges associated with supporting its academic cloud computing needs. The Academic Cloud Computing Pilot, that was introduced in Spring 2021 and refined in the Fall, enabled a better academic experience for students and very successfully supported faculty needs related to classes and senior projects. "

-Chad Williams, Computer Science Department Chair

Academic Cloud Computing Pilot

In the spring of 2021 a pilot program for cloud computing in the classroom began, leveraging cloud providers such as Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure and Google Firebase. Over the course of the year cloud resources were provided to 15 teams that spanned 6 classes. Some of the services used included Windows and Linux servers, cloud storage, serverless computing, and database services. The teams used the cloud infrastructure to build a wide range of applications.

The resources provided by the cloud pilot are instrumental in maintaining accreditation for some of the programs offered at CCSU.

The cost of using the cloud resources was minimized by using free services such as Amazon Web Services Academy whenever possible. This program offered by Amazon provides a $100 credit per class to students. With this credit students can access a variety of Amazon services in a controlled lab environment. In some cases where the free services did not meet the students' needs paid services were used. Students' access to these environments was restricted to ensure costs were not excessive and so that they would not accidently damage another students' infrastructure.

34K+

WebEx Meetings

23K+

IT Incident and Service Request Tickets Completed

9K+

Zoom Meetings

New Technologies to Improve Teaching & Learning Spaces

Nearly 70 classrooms, conference rooms, and office suites were equipped with state-of-the-art technology to facilitate classroom instruction as well as web conferencing capabilities in seminar and conference rooms. AirMedia, which enables wireless control of the audio visual equipment, is now the standard in future classroom builds as well as a "liberty ring" to help connect devices other than HDMI like iPads and more. Projects are underway in other areas including the Student Center, Memorial Hall and East Hall to outfit conference rooms that support video conferencing and should be completed later this summer.

Interfolio

With continuous improvement and efficiency in mind, the Provost's office kicked off a pilot of Interfolio. Their Promotion & Tenure product is an efficient and secure way to collect, view, annotate, label, and route candidate materials. Leveraging templates created at our sister school, Eastern Connecticut State University, allowed us to get our pilot up and running quickly. Current faculty who went through their review process duing 2021-2022 will take part in the pilot. Portfolios from renewals, promotion, tenure, and sixth year professional assessments will be converted from their current OneDrive folders to Interfolio. These will serve as a pilot to better determine and roll out support on a larger scale for faculty to use Interfolio.

Datapoint

Working with Quest Software Inc, Administrative Technology Services is currently migrating our Hyperion reporting objects to the Datapoint application for all reporting needs. Datapoint enables us to efficiently integrate, access, prepare, and provision data. Included in the application is a visual query builder, SQL editor, Excel reports, charts and graphs, ability to compare and sync, as well the functionality to automate and schedule reports. It also includes local storage, integrations, and ways to improve analysis and data visualizations. Several business departments have begun their use of Datapoint as a pilot for day-to-day reporting. As Datapoint continues to evolve on campus, more and more departments can begin to explore the possibilities of analytical data analysis to help better assist with decision making, business processes, and data owner responsibilities. The "go live" of the report intelligence server is expected during the Summer of 2022.

CCSU Launches First XR Lab in State of Connecticut

When CCSU was designing it's Applied Innovation Hub, it looked to create a space which would allow for academic research, excellence in teaching, and allow for next generation of learning opportunities for CCSU students. After researching numerous options, CCSU worked with the President's industry advisory board, faculty, and administrators to design and develop the creation of an XR Lab. XR is an abbreviation for Virtual Reality (VR), Mixed Reality (MR), and Augmented Reality (AR). CCSU's newest lab will combine Dell Alienware computers with leading augmented and virtual reality headsets including HTC's Vive, the Samsung Galaxy Quest, the Microsoft Halolens, and the Magic Leap headset. The XR Lab space continues to advance work already being done in pilots. For example, professor Dr. Haoyu Wang currently uses the 1st generation Microsoft Halolens in the programming of co-bots in CCSU's robotics class. CCSU interim Provost, Dr. Kimberly Kostelis stated, "We're excited to create an interdisciplinary space like the XR Lab. Virtual, mixed, and augmented reality experiences and research have grown during the COVID pandemic. It's great that we can be the first University in Connecticut with a formal space designed to consume and create virtual and mixed reality objects. From surgical simulations in healthcare to data and analytics in Finance, VR is bringing together a new way of viewing, manipulating, and working." The XR lab is in the Applied Innovation Hub, room 214. The CCSU Information Technology Division has been working with the Provost's office and faculty to pilot classes across our academic disciplines for the Fall using the XR technology and looks forward to the room formally opening for Fall 2022.

Hyland OnBase

Hyland OnBase is our new state-of-the-art enterprise content management (ECM) system. OnBase will allow CCSU to better manage documents, forms, workflows and processes:

- Document Capture – Centralizes the capture (scanning or e-mails) and storage of all paper documents.
- Enterprise Document Management – Allows for quick retrieval of critical business documents.
- Automated Processes –optimizes repeatable business processes and repetitive tasks to deliver information to the right people.
- Electronic Routing – Digitally sign documents and securely route them to appropriate personnel.
- Document Generation and Distribution – ability to use captured data to achieve efficient document generation and document distribution.
- Records Management – Manage record retention plans.
- Integration – OnBase integrates with our ERP (Banner) system, Slate (Enrollment Management) and other internal applications as needed.
- Digital Forms – migrate all paper forms to digital/electronic versions and include them in workflows for approvals and business processes.
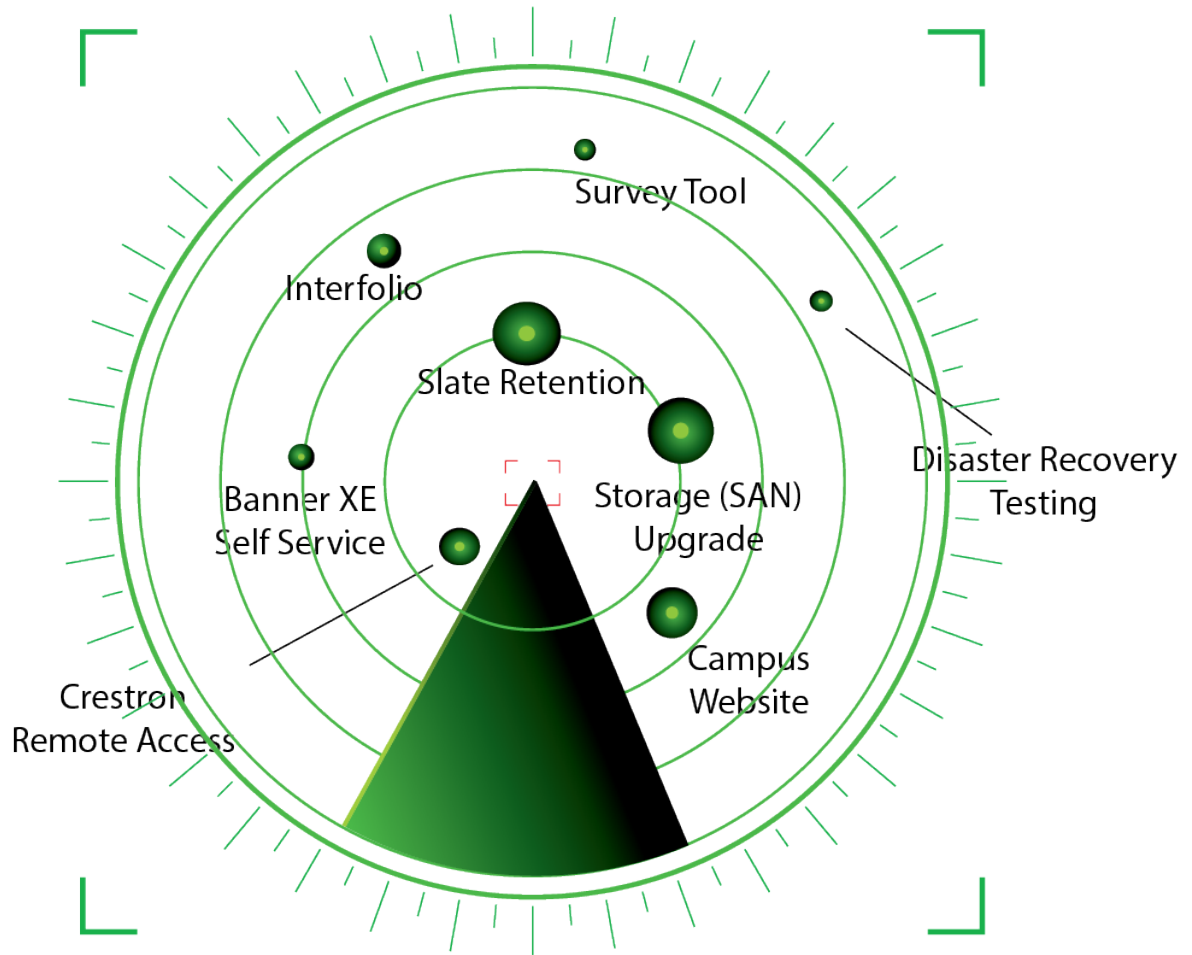
Campus Upgrades

WiFi Updates

We contiuously strive for improvement of wireless internet coverage on campus. This year we added 20 new wireless access points (WAPs) around common outdoor spaces on campus. We have also added 180 new indoor WAPs to the campus network, in areas such as the Applied Innovation Hub, Barnard Hall, and many residence halls to improve signal strength. Students, faculty, and staff can depend on continuous wireless connections no matter where they are on campus.

PaperCut

The Copy Center has undergone several improvements to deliver services more efficiently to our university community including a switch to PaperCut, a new job ticketing application. PaperCut is designed to reduce costs, align our software with current ADA guidelines and provide a greater set of features and services for faculty and staff. While the cost structure of printing has changed, it has allowed the university to move to a more efficient pay per page model. In the past, the Business Services department provided allotments of funds to departments for submitting jobs. The allotments were debited over the course of the academic year and administered internally by the Business Services and Copy Center departments. Using PaperCut, it now allows our Accounting Department to directly debit departmental Banner indexes for payment on a monthly basis similar to the pcard process.

Alertus

Under the directive to enhance and improve the university's Emergency Notification System (ENS), we have added 50 Alertus Alert Beacons. The beacons emit bright strobe lights and clear emergency tone sounders to alert building occupants of an emergency. They can also display a custom emergency message and provide instructions on how to respond appropriately. These beacons are integrated into our current ENS to speed the messaging across campus. The devices were placed in most building on campus, in common areas to maximize coverage.

On Our Radar for 2023

Survey Tool

Interfolio

Slate Retention

Banner XE
Self Service

Storage (SAN)
Upgrade

Disaster Recovery
Testing

Crestron
Remote Access

Campus
Website