May 9, 2012

Dear Trinity Community,

Information Technology Services (ITS) Update

As the flurry of the end of a busy spring semester comes to close, Information Technology Services is gearing up for many summer projects. It promises to be another productive summer, with upgrades to Moodle, email, and lots of activity in the "one card" area.

Moodle & Word Press Upgrades

The migration to Moodle 2.2.2 will begin on Tuesday, May 22nd at Noon and will be available again no later than on Friday, May 25th in time for the start of the first summer semester. This release offers enhancements to the overall user experience, a more flexible file management system, an improved wiki, and a more comprehensive and up-to-date set of plugins. There is also a mobile extension that allows access from your smartphones and tablets. The Word Press update is scheduled for later this summer. This will provide the most up-to-date plugins and widgets, enhanced web-publishing capabilities and significant security improvements which will help reduce spam and other inconveniences.

Learning Spaces & Lab Updates

In support of the learning space initiatives, this summer we will be re-configuring the B02 lab space to include seminar style seating as well as work station clusters to better accommodate the pedagogical needs of the disciplines that will teach in this room.   This will in turn free up the LSC 138/139 to become a large lecture style classroom. In addition, we will be adding several work stations to the Social Science Center in Williams to create expanded study space for students. By the start of the fall semester we will have worked out an access solution so the room will be available in the evenings for the students.

 Each summer we develop a new image for the computers in the labs and classrooms incorporating new software, latest releases, etc. This year the windows operating system will remains Windows 7. All work on the labs is scheduled for completion by August 3rd. A detailed list of software included in the image can be found at our website: http://www.trincoll.edu/Library/its/computing/Pages/Lab.aspx .

"One Card" / Access Control

There are two major initiatives under the One Card umbrella taking place this summer. The first is the update of the Blackboard Commerce system. This is the system that supports meal plans, vending and the Bantam Bucks program. The cutover to the new system is scheduled for

July 20th. In addition we have been working with the office of Campus Life to extend the offerings of the Bantam Bucks program to many other restaurants in Hartford and West Hartford. As negotiations are completed we will work with Campus Life in announcing the new offerings.

The next significant area is the start of the transition from our Interflex (locknetics) Access Control System to the Blackboard Lock Management System. We hired an industry expert to work with us in developing a plan to meet the campus needs. As part of that process we met with constituents across campus to learn more about their needs and uses of the system.

As an initial step we will be issuing new ID cards to Faculty, Staff and Students this summer. The new cards will be more durable, with a plastic coating that will retain the quality of the photos and they will contain the new electronic credentials that will be needed as we migrate to new locks. The replacement of the locknetics system will be a multi-year plan. We will provide updates as the dates become firm.

Organizational Changes

We are excited to announce the promotion of Jessica Tait to the position of Network Administrator. Jess is a 2009 graduate of Trinity College and was previously in the position of Distributed Computing Specialist. Jess has hit the ground running and will be working on wireless network and switching infrastructure improvements during the summer.

We welcomed Tony O'Rourke to the Web Development team in Academic Computing on March 1st. Tony's initial assignments include the Moodle upgrade and support of upgrades to Trinflix and will be working on the development of a graduate studies application process.

ITEC

In conjunction with the Dean of Faculty Office and the Center for Teaching and Learning, ITEC is sponsoring several grants of up to $1,000 each for Trinity faculty to enhance student learning with technology during the 2012-13 academic year.

Our objective is to encourage the thoughtful use of technology to expand liberal arts learning beyond course timeslots and classroom walls. ITEC is also sponsoring a spring workshop on , "How Can We Enhance our Teaching with Technology?" on Tuesday, May 15th, 10am-1pm in Seabury S205. http://www.trincoll.edu/Library/its/ITEC/Pages/Faculty-Workshop.aspx

Web Help Desk Software

The transition to a new Help Desk ticketing solution has been set for Monday, May 21st.   We are excited about the deployment of this new tool which provides many feature enhancements for those manning the Help Desk operation, and it also provides a portal for each community member to view the status of their tickets online.   The reporting of facilities issues has been transitioned to the facilities department, tickets can be placed at their new website http://facilities.trincoll.edu and are no longer handled by the helpdesk effective May 14th. The ITS Help Desk does handle all technology issues as well as those concerning doors and locks (lockline@trincoll.edu). Students should continue to report technology, cable TV, ID Card, door & lock issues at ext. 2007 and faculty and staff at ext. 2100.

Starting Out

The Starting Out program web presence continues to expand with the on-line course selection process being added this year. The new features of the first year web portal have allowed the college to reduce the number of Starting Out packets being mailed home from 4 to 2. Each year we look for improvements, making it both easier for our incoming class, as well as the management of the data on the back-end.   One new aspect of this project is the development of a process to load parent data directly into PeopleSoft saving the Development Office staff hundreds of hours of data entry effort.

Network & Systems

Care and feeding of our network infrastructure is essential to the health of our servers and personal computers. This summer we continue to upgrade the Ethernet switches deployed throughout the campus. We are also moving the connection point between our campus and our second ISP to ensure that we remain online in the event of damage to our primary switch room or the conduit that leaves campus under Vernon Street.

We will be applying the latest patch release to Exchange 2010 on Tuesday, June 26th during our regular maintenance window, which runs from 5:30am – 7:00am. This particular release is just part of the routine maintenance and we anticipate a brief interruption of service of 5 – 10 minutes for server re-boots. This will allow us to provide an online mechanism for archiving old email as well as improve our ability to "cluster" our Exchange server to improve performance and availability.

Enterprise Applications

Preparations for the PeopleSoft 9.1 upgrade are underway. The upgrade to Version 9.1 is scheduled for September 29th and 30th and centers on the "split" of Campus Solution (student/

alumni) data from the Human Capital Management (employee) data. Our key milestones for this upgrade include:

June 1,2012 – Creation of Initial Integrated Test Environment

July 15, 2012 – Test Environments available for user testing

September 17, 2012 – User Signoff

We anticipate being able to pilot the on-line time and labor functions for student and non-exempt staff payroll to begin this summer. This will result in the elimination of the handling of paper time sheets for these groups.

Working with the Development Office we are scheduled to roll-out a new alumni community application, iModules, in late August. This system replaces the Harris solution and will provide a more flexible user interface and an enhanced gift processing capabilities which will better accommodate matching and recurring gifts.

There have been some significant enhancements for the Admissions Office this year. Online Decisions were introduced with the ED2 round and were used for the first time in Regular decisions this past March. The change to alert prospective students of their admissions decisions electronically also resulted in a change in business practice of only mailing letters to accepted students. In addition, an online check list which provides applicants with a quick and easy way to see which documents had been received by our Admissions Office was made available in the fall.

Trinity has signed a contract with the National Student Clearing house to streamline our processes for compliance reporting. The clearing house provides FERPA compliance enrollment and degree verification for insurance providers, loan providers, employers, etc. This will result in labor savings in the Financial Aid and Registrars Offices.

Partnering with the Office of Human Resources and the Dean of Faculty Office, an online applicant tracking system will be introduced to the campus this summer. The solution selected is PeopleAdmin, a vendor that focuses on the higher education market. This tool will allow applicants to apply on-line and eliminates the need to use the Sharepoint site to store applicant materials. Hiring managers will have immediate access to applications and will have tools to manage the applicant pool.

As a second phase of the implementation of the PyraMED Health Management System, we will introduce the Student Health Portal. By June 1st, the portal will give students the ability to fill out and submit health history forms online. Students will also be able to print their immunization record directly from the system.

Data Security Initiatives

An ITS internal security committee has begun focusing their energies on establishing best practices for securing mobile devices, and has recommended that all mobile devices be password protected. In the near future we will be enforcing the use of passwords (PIN's) for all faculty and staff cell phones and tablets that synchronize e-mail and calendars with the college's Exchange server through ActiveSync. In addition, we have developed a method to have devices "wiped clean" in the case of loss or theft to further protect the college from having confidential or sensitive information get into the hands of someone not affiliated with the institution. You can find these instructions on our web-site at:
http://www.trincoll.edu/Library/its/security/Pages/LostStolenDevices.aspx

We have also begun the process of encrypting laptops to protect against unauthorized access to the contents of the hard drive potentially including confidential and sensitive information. All laptops that are updated or installed this summer will be encrypted as part of our standard procedures, and a schedule is being developed to address existing laptops. If you are not on the upgrade list for this summer and would like to have your laptop encrypted, please contact the Help Desk to request this service. Especially if you are storing sensitive information, we will give your laptop higher priority on the schedule.

Another security initiative has been to analyze our custom COGNOS reports and remove where appropriate the use of social security numbers and date of birth, which are both considered personally identifiable information.

Wrap-Up

It promises to be a very busy summer. If you have any questions about any of these initiatives or organizational changes I can be reached at ext.2525 or email, Suzanne.Aber@trincoll.edu.

Sue Aber

Director of Information Technology Services