

Nicholls State University

IT Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2020

Vision – To continually enhance and effectively utilize an advanced technological infrastructure

Mission and Core Values – To ensure that students, faculty and staff have the opportunity to take advantage of current and emerging technology resources and facilities while lowering the total cost of ownership.

Current Status – Funding of projects at Nicholls State University is primarily based on funds allocated from state revenues. Given the current fiscal shortfall as well as future expected shortfalls of state revenues, Nicholls has experienced a significant decrease in operating funds and is expected to absorb more reductions in the near future. This has hampered the university's ability to fund beneficial projects and will continue to significantly influence the implementation of future projects.

Current IT Environment – Current standard technical toolset and strategic technology investments

Central Computer Equipment: Our hardware configuration supports the mission-critical applications important to Nicholls State University. We have completed an infrastructure upgrade in an effort to reach our strategic goal to possess a state-of-the-art technology infrastructure. In the event of a disaster that incapacitates the data center, core administrative and academic applications can be moved quickly to back up systems at our Disaster Recovery site.

Administrative Computing Systems: Nicholls uses a UNIX and web-based system using Sungard HE Banner software suite and the Oracle database. The system now powers the registration and records process for students, financial aid operations, human resources, payroll, and financial functions such as budget tracking and purchasing and grants management.

Network: Significant network upgrades have recently taken place. The network provides 100Mbps to 1Gbps speeds to the end device with 1Gbps to 10Gbps to the core network. Our Fiber optic cable plant has been enhanced with a large count hybrid fiber for added expansion with multiple paths into each campus building. The network has expanded into campus housing. This expansion has doubled our network capacity. To compensate for this additional use, the University had to increase its Internet bandwidth to 500 Mbps.

Wireless Network: The University wireless network covers all academic areas and most outdoor areas on campus. Basic Internet access is available for all Faculty, Staff, Students, and campus Guests. Secure wireless access to the campus intranet resources is available to users on an as needed basis requiring additional authentication and security measures. Campus wireless is designed to give the end users access to all legal Internet resources as if they were connecting at their home.

Staffing Strategy – Nicholls is almost entirely supported by in-house personnel, with very little, if any, outsourcing. Currently, only critical IT staff positions are filled if an employee is lost due to resignation or termination due to the budget difficulties / hiring freeze. We do everything that we can to maintain the current staffing. The future is totally dependent on the budget.

Nicholls State University

IT Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2020

Goals, Objectives, and Initiatives

1. Build a solid and secure IT network/infrastructure at Nicholls that is modern, reliable and kept up-to-date.

Responsibility: Information Technology (IT), Academic Computing (AC), Physical Plant (PP)

1.1. The University will provide a campus-wide, advanced network infrastructure that provides secure, open access wireless and hard wired access that is ubiquitous and high-speed.

Responsibility: IT

1.1.1. The University will provide a ubiquitous campus-wide wireless network.

Responsibility: IT

1.1.2. The University will enhance the fiber optic network to insure redundant paths to major nodes.

Responsibility: IT

1.1.3. The University will implement a network switch replacement upgrade plan that will fund replacements on a six year cycle.

Responsibility: IT

1.2. The University will provide for the expanded use of emerging technologies and mobile computing devices such as Internet-enabled cellular phones and touchpads. Nicholls will ensure that these technologies become widespread in use and are able to communicate with the most common campus systems.

Responsibility: IT

1.2.1. The University will provide ready access to power receptacles campus-wide to accommodate the needs of mobile devices.

Responsibility: PP

1.2.2. The University will investigate mobile device support for the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning), LMS (Learning Management System,) and CMS (Content Management System).

Responsibility: IT, AC

1.2.3. The University will enable authorized users with laptops and other mobile computing devices to access network resources.

Responsibility: IT, AC

1.3. The University will provide the necessary equipment and staff to monitor and respond to network tasks and insure the network is continuously available and reliable.

Responsibility: IT

1.3.1. The University will provide staff to enable 24/7 support for major applications.

Responsibility: IT, AC

1.4. The University will provide a more robust IT infrastructure, including seamless access to campus network drives for faculty/staff personal computers and increased support for student computer labs.

Responsibility: IT, AC

1.4.1. The University will upgrade internet bandwidth on campus as needed.

Responsibility: IT

Nicholls State University

IT Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2020

1.4.2. The University will construct a modern information technology building that will include a new office space for all IT employees, Computing Center, and Open access labs.

Responsibility: IT, AC, PP

1.5. The University will assess IT needs prior to construction and renovation.

Responsibility: PP

1.6. The University will assess all implications of third party software systems prior to acquisition.

Responsibility: Banner Global Support Team

1.7. The University will continue use for state-of-the-art technology to provide a safe and secure campus environment.

Responsibility: IT, PP

1.8. The University will continue to provide robust telecommunication services.

Responsibility: IT

1.8.1. The University will provide increased access to telephone switch features and capabilities.

Responsibility: IT

2. Develop a robust, multi-tiered technology support enterprise to meet the varying levels and specific needs of the Nicholls user community.

Responsibility: IT, Finance, Human Resources (HR), Helpdesk, University Relations (UR), Center for Advancing Faculty Engagement (Café')

2.1. The University will enhance technology support.

Responsibility: IT, Finance, HR

2.1.1. The University will provide a quick response to faculty and staff technology support issues.

Responsibility: IT, Finance, HR

2.1.2. The University will enhance technology support for students, including a 24/7 helpdesk for students and a face-to-face help kiosk during daytime/evening class hours.

Responsibility: IT, Helpdesk

2.1.3. The University will provide technical support and on-going multi-tiered training for Banner modules.

Responsibility: IT, Finance, HR

2.1.4. The University will continue to provide enhanced assistance to new faculty and instructors by identifying the technology services that are available to them, helping them to access these services, and making effective and efficient use of those technology services.

Responsibility: Café'

2.2. The University will provide support for web content contributors and approvers.

Responsibility: University Relations (UR)

Nicholls State University

IT Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2020

- 2.2.1. The University will increase support for the Content Management System (CMS).
Responsibility: IT, UR
 - 2.3. The University will review and evaluate the design of the University website.
Responsibility: IT, UR
 - 2.3.1. The University will assess the effectiveness of the design and structure of the website.
Responsibility: IT, UR
 - 2.3.2. The University will evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of the CMS.
Responsibility: IT, UR
 - 2.3.3. The University will assess the needs of the website users.
Responsibility: IT, UR
 - 2.4. The University will continue to provide a Learning Management System (LMS) that meets the needs of users.
Responsibility: IT, AC
 - 2.4.1. The University will provide increased computing resources for the LMS, including reliable Internet connectivity beginning on the first day of classes, after hours help for the first 2 weeks of the semester, more computer resources to the most important servers and an increase in server capacity.
Responsibility: IT, AC
 - 2.4.2. The University will continually evaluate the LMS and review new and emerging systems as appropriate.
Responsibility: IT, AC, Café'
 - 2.4.3. The University will expand faculty support for the LMS to include after-hours training and support.
Responsibility: IT, AC, Café'
 - 2.5. The University will continue to encourage and work closely with the student Tech Fee committee to ensure these monies are spent wisely.
Responsibility: IT, AC, Academic Affairs
 - 2.6. The University will provide equipment and technology support to allow continuation of coursework from remote locations in case of natural disasters, pandemics or other emergencies.
Responsibility: IT, AC, Academic Affairs
- 3. Develop robust, plentiful, and accessible IT resources for student learning, research, and scholarship, and as a tool to enrich students' life experiences at Nicholls.**
Responsibility: IT, AC, Library, Disabilities Services (DS), Student Services (SS)
- 3.1. The University will provide a technology-rich Library for research and for student life enrichment in the Information (Learning) Commons model.
Responsibility: IT, Library

Nicholls State University

IT Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2020

3.1.1. The University will increase computing resources (including hardware and software) for the Library.

Responsibility: IT, Library

3.2. The University will continue to provide technology that will support students with special needs.

Responsibility: IT, Library, DS

3.3. The University will investigate agreements to provide low cost software and computing devices for student personal use.

Responsibility: IT, SS

4. Develop robust, plentiful, and accessible IT resources to enable faculty teaching and research and staff endeavors at Nicholls.

Responsibility: IT, Café', AC, Deans

4.1. The University will continue to provide the necessary resources to enable faculty to develop, record, maintain, and disseminate digital course content, such as audio and/or video presentations, in a variety of formats.

Responsibility: Café'

4.2. The University will seek opportunities to advance its technological infrastructure for research.

Responsibility: IT, AC, Deans

4.3. The University will continue to provide standardized IT for classrooms & labs.

Responsibility: AC, Deans

4.3.1. The University will equip and maintain larger classrooms with equipment that will allow students to clearly hear and see the lecture being given. This may include, but is not limited to, multiple projection screens, speaker systems, and a means to record lectures.

Responsibility: AC, Deans

4.3.2. The University will continue to maintain and keep equipment up-to-date.

Responsibility: AC, Deans

4.3.3. The University will provide, as needed, faculty who use computer labs a means to remotely access a students' workstation from the instructor's podium in order to resolve a student issue or to assess whether a student is on task.

Responsibility: AC, Deans

4.4. The University will provide standardized IT to staff and faculty.

Responsibility: IT

4.5. The University will provide technical support and training to assist in the delivery of instruction.

Responsibility: Café'

Nicholls State University

IT Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2020

4.5.1. The University will provide enhanced assistance to new faculty and instructors by identifying the technology services that are available to them, helping them to access these services, and by making effective and efficient use of those technology services.
Responsibility: Cafe

4.6. The University will investigate agreements to provide low cost software and computing devices for faculty personal use.
Responsibility: IT, AC

5. Develop sound information systems featuring a rich set of applications and tools that address the increasing need for more effective and efficient institutional processes and provide for advanced academic analytic, statistic, and research support at Nicholls.
Responsibility: IT, Finance, HR

5.1. The University will develop information systems that facilitate daily University operations, such as expanding the use of document imaging and workflow.
Responsibility: IT, Finance, HR

5.2. The University will implement a tiered storage architecture for institutional data.
Responsibility: IT

5.3. The University will provide training to IT staff as well as other technology support staff on software, equipment and emerging technologies.
Responsibility: IT

5.4. The University will provide effective and transparent management solutions that will maintain systems and applications in use across various desktop and servers.
Responsibility: IT

5.4.1. The University will provide faster ways to deploy systems and applications.
Responsibility: IT

6. Develop IT advisory and communication channels to ensure the continued involvement of the Nicholls community in the implementation of the IT Plan and ongoing day-to-day provision of IT services to the campus.
Responsibility: IT, AC, UR, AA

6.1. The University will involve the campus in the implementation of the IT plan.

6.1.1. The University will mass communicate the approved IT Plan to the Nicholls community.
Responsibility: IT, AC, UR

6.1.2. The University will involve persons with identified responsibility in a periodic review of the IT plan.
Responsibility: IT, UR

6.2. The University will investigate and develop multiple support channels based upon user's specific needs.
Responsibility: IT, AC, AA

Nicholls State University

IT Strategic Plan

FY 2016-2020

- 6.2.1.** The University will provide web-based services, including a clear, easy to use, set of procedures for departments to access IT services.
Responsibility: IT, UR
- 6.2.2.** The University will survey the Nicholls community for evaluation of IT services and progresses, and to identify barriers to technology utilization.
Responsibility: Office of Institutional Research
- 6.3.** The University will develop workshops, presentations, and development activities to help the whole Nicholls community explore the implications of rapidly changing technology.
Responsibility: Cafe
- 6.4.** The University will keep the Nicholls community informed of IT services and activities.
Responsibility: UR
- 6.5.** The University will regularly review computer policies.
Responsibility: IT