

Repositioning Information Technology **A UCLA Initiative**

UCLA is situated at an intersection of converging forces that requires a bold new approach in its technical, organizational and fiscal practice for information technology. The motivational forces are both positive and negative. On the positive side, as information technology matures, commoditization follows and an opportunity exists for UCLA to leverage this trend to produce cost savings at the IT infrastructure layers. These cost savings will ultimately allow a reallocation of funds to those IT resources that directly support the core research and educational mission of the University. On the other side, state budget cuts that add to existing IT deficits, IT security demands that continue to escalate, and new regulatory mandates that underscore vulnerabilities in data privacy and piracy, combine to create a negative force on the University that cannot be adequately managed without changing current IT organizational and fiscal practices. While any one of these forces demands new thinking and response, it is their convergence at this time that requires immediate and sustained action as an institutional imperative.

A campus initiative has been created to address this challenge, based on the existing plan to consolidate IT infrastructure layers developed in response to the Chancellor's call for cost reductions in 2003. Crucially, this campus initiative moves a plan primarily focused on individual cost saving components to an institutional initiative to reallocate cost savings into IT programs and services that can differentiate UCLA as a leading University in research, instruction and community service.

The goals of this initiative are to:

- Validate the value of regional and central repositioning of infrastructure facilities as detailed in the existing cost reduction plan.
- Create a new fiscal and technical model to adequately sustain and continually enhance UCLA's IT infrastructure by producing cost savings and avoidance at the infrastructure layer.
- Create a new fiscal and technical model that preserves and ultimately augments local funding, now invested to support distributed infrastructure, so that it can be shifted into direct support of the core research, instruction, and community service mission of UCLA.

In practice, the initiative challenges UCLA's current distributed fiscal and technical environment and seeks to significantly reduce the number of email systems, network structures, security centers, and data and server centers to achieve these goals while preserving and supporting the distributed, entrepreneurial culture and lifeblood of UCLA.

A proposed planning process for implementation of this initiative is attached. Emphasizing transparency, this process is targeting an implementation plan by Summer 2005.

Background

Cost Reduction – In January 2004, the Information Technology Planning Board responded to the Chancellor’s request for information technology savings and cost avoidance opportunities. Several consolidation initiatives were proposed to reduce the cost of (1) remote access services, (2) email systems, (3) directory services, (4) email and network security, (5) network infrastructure and (6) data centers.

Preliminary analyses focused on infrastructure systems and centers (items 2, 4, 5 and 6) estimate that UCLA could have as much as \$ 7 - \$10M annually to reallocate by significantly reducing the number of technology centers (see table). This reallocation would allow in part for an infusion of new funding for continued high quality campus connectivity and to fund escalating network security costs.

	Current (est.)	Potential* (est.)
Email systems	50	> 1, but < 10
Network and security centers	40	> 1, but < 10
Primary data centers	10	> 1, but < 5
Dept server centers	hundreds	> 1, but < ?
*number of "regional" centers that could support the campus.		

Infrastructure Funding Requirement – An interrelated set of funding and resource allocation initiatives was recently launched to (a) address an estimated \$3 – 5M gap in annual funding for campus networking as “Connected Project” funds are now spent and in deficit and (b) fiscally position the campus for wireless and network-based voice and messaging services. Each of these initiatives has required a 6-month effort beginning in January 2004 to disaggregate technology from voice services funding and to rationalize new costing structures.

Network Security – UCLA’s completely distributed networking model can no longer effectively nor economically address the increasing demands of security threats. The current estimate to adequately respond institutionally is \$2M annually.

Repositioning IT – While it can be argued that the current fiscal and technical distributed models have served UCLA well in the start-up and pioneering years of information technology adoption, its current application, represented in practice by numerous distributed infrastructure centers across UCLA, has become an obstacle to the full realization of IT to support core research, instruction, community and productivity programs and services.

Preliminary analysis indicates significant potential for cost savings and funding reallocation to (1) cover the continuing costs of the increasingly ”commodity” aspects of IT infrastructure, (2) minimize the funding drain on escalating infrastructure costs, (3) push resources toward department and end-user research, instruction and community partnership services, (4) rationalize IT expenditures and (5) better position for desired regional and institutional behaviors.