University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Information Technology Strategic Plan

2024-2028

University of Wisconsin
Whitewater

Information Technology (IT) is an integral part of any organization, including institutions of higher education. No longer can we think of IT Services as electives or siloed from the rest of the operations of the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater. Information Technology, and those who work in the area, do not drive the strategic path of the university. Instead, IT Services (ITS) takes its direction from the University Strategic Plan, university leadership, governance, and industry best practices and knowledge – assimilating multiple inputs to arrive at the best point-in-time plan for supporting the university to provide the best services to our students, our employees, and our community.

This Information Technology Strategic Plan is the result of overlaying the University Strategic Plan with key concerns from the university community, current trends in Information Technology, and compliance requirements. This plan was created through the collaborative efforts of IT Services and the UWW community. The goal was to predict challenges and identify improvements that will focus our actions to prepare the university's technology landscape for meeting and exceeding the future needs of our students, employees, and community.

The common themes that arose out of focus group discussions, interviews with individuals, and discussions with shared governance are the following:

- **IT GOVERNANCE**
- **CYBERSECURITY**
- **AI AND OTHER INNOVATION**
- **DATA (GOVERNANCE, INTELLIGENCE, AND LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT)**
- **INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE**
- **INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION**

THEMES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

IT GOVERNANCE

IT governance is at the forefront of Information Technology concerns at UW-Whitewater. Effective IT governance establishes a framework that ensures IT decisions align with business objectives, while ensuring regulatory compliance and mitigating risk.

IT GOVERNANCE STRATEGIC GOAL:

Establish an IT governance process that aligns IT decisions with the institution's overall mission and strategic objectives through open communication and collaboration between IT Services and the rest of the university. Ensure that the university complies with all UW System, industry, and government regulations.

IT GOVERNANCE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1: Draft, approve, and implement a new university IT strategic plan that is aligned with the university strategic plan.

Objective 2: Redefine, restructure, or establish IT governance processes and advisory committees to create an open communication platform for input, feedback, and advice regarding technology decisions.

Objective 3: Establish regular reporting cadence from advisory groups and IT Services to the Executive Tier for project submissions, prioritization, and funding approval.

Objective 4: Work with UW System and UW-Whitewater resources to ensure compliance with PCI 4.0 requirements.

Objective 5: Complete an accessibility audit of all university web pages and create continuous improvement plan for ensuring future compliance.

Objective 6: Work with UW System and UW-Whitewater resources to achieve compliance with the new Title II ADA accessibility law, effective April 2026.

CYBERSECURITY

Cybersecurity threats are increasing in frequency, complexity, and overall risk to organizations. The payload from a cybersecurity attack can be loss of data, system outages, financial losses, or a combination of factors. Universities, like any organization, must invest time and resources in the development, documentation, and testing of cybersecurity monitoring, early detection, and rapid response techniques to ensure the best level of readiness and response that is feasible for the university – balancing the risks versus cost of mitigating solutions.

CYBERSECURITY STRATEGIC GOAL:

Identify, document, and test threat detection tools, response processes and procedures, communication plans, and recovery procedures. Ensure an appropriate level of ITS staff training for adequate coverage. Collaborate with Universities of Wisconsin to incorporate standard operating procedures, where possible.

CYBERSECURITY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1: Document existing cybersecurity tools and ensure internal support staff are adequately trained.

Objective 2: Update university Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) for cybersecurity attack.

Objective 3: Work with Universities of Wisconsin System staff to identify opportunities for standard operating practices, common toolsets, and other areas of centralization/collaboration that will effectively streamline and improve university responses to cyber threats and mitigate risks to the university.

AI AND OTHER INNOVATION

Universities must stay competitive, relevant, and operationally strong. IT innovation is a critical factor of success. Artificial intelligence (AI) was a popular topic in focus group discussions about the need for university technology to be current. AI technology is a polarizing subject in higher education. The concerns regarding privacy, built-in bias, and the use/submission of unoriginal material complicate the desire to utilize AI technology for research, applied educational experiences, and operational efficiencies. Nonetheless, AI is a critical technology – and one in which UW-Whitewater must invest to harness the benefits AI solutions offer our students, faculty, and staff.

AI AND INNOVATION GOAL:

Harness the capabilities of new technology to improve services for students, enhance the quality of academic and research experiences, and improve operational efficiencies at the university. Leverage the benefits available through the UW System to augment internal university resources.

Objective 1: Establish an AI workgroup to provide guidance, suggest technology solutions, and other input to identify university-wide objectives for AI integration.

Objective 2: Work with the UW System to provide standards of practice for AI implementation.

Objective 3: Provide a generative AI tool for broad university use within the guidelines and objectives set by the UW System and UW-Whitewater.

Objective 4: Identify, vet, and leverage AI features available through existing enterprise software solutions to maximize operational efficiencies.

Objective 5: Establish procedures for introducing new technology.

DATA-DRIVEN INSTITUTION

Data and the technology to use data are essential to higher education. Surviving and succeeding in higher education is rooted in the intelligent collection, analysis and use of data. Data analytics will highlight the paths to providing the best education and support services to meet the needs of our students. Likewise, data can assist the university with identifying areas for growth, cost consolidation, and predicting future trends.

DATA-DRIVEN INSTITUTION GOAL:

Review and revise data governance, management, access, and privacy processes to ensure the university is operating as effectively as possible while serving students, maintaining compliance, and identifying areas of improvement, growth, and efficiency. Growing the level of data literacy across the university is a fundamental step to achieving this goal.

Objective 1: Grow institutional data literacy, including expanding institutional awareness of data trustees, stewards, and data classification.

Objective 2: Maximize data integration potential by streamlining data-sharing between systems to provide easier access to data between units and reduce duplication.

Objective 3: Review data access and retention policies and update, as necessary to ensure compliance and appropriate privacy and security.

INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

Institutional Resilience was the theme for the 2024 Educause Top 10 and is applicable to UW-Whitewater. Many of the discussions and questions raised during focus groups centered around the university's ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. Evolving societal expectations of the academic and co-curricular offerings at universities, changes in student needs, and shifting demographic and economic pressures require universities to be more agile to be successful in their missions.

INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE GOAL:

Establish a strong foundation of technology, support staff, and business processes to enable the university to adapt and react quickly to changing demands.

Objective 1: Identify IT organizational structure that meets the needs of the university for the future and recruit/retain according to this new model.

Objective 2: Review and revise internal IT support processes to ensure university students, faculty, and staff receive the highest level of service.

Objective 3: Update university administrative processes, data management, and technology solutions to reduce administrative costs and improve services for students.

INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

Institutional Collaboration at UW-Whitewater has two key facets. The first is cross-collaboration between departments internally at the university. The second is collaboration with other universities and the system offices at the Universities of Wisconsin. Sharing common objectives, knowledge, resources, and solutions is an important factor in achieving the university's strategic goals.

INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION GOAL:

Capitalize on opportunities for collaboration within the university and across UW System to provide new or improved services to students, faculty, and staff; reduce operating costs; mitigate security risks; and provide access to new technologies that will assist the university in its growth and strategic initiatives.

Objective 1: Expand the role of IT business analysts within UW-Whitewater to ensure every area of the university has IT representation.

Objective 2: Merge University Housing IT resources with central ITS to combine resources and focus on improved services for students, eliminate duplication of efforts, and optimize the university security profile.

Objective 3: Transition Student Information System (WINS) to PeopleSoft as a Service (PSaaS).

Objective 4: Migrate Vendor Risk Management tasks to UW System as a shared service.

Objective 5: Work with UW System to successfully migrate to Okta and a common identity management system.

Objective 6: Investigate the feasibility of a centrally managed communication/collaboration system with UW System (Microsoft Teams).

Objective 7: Work with UW System to implement Workday through the Administration Transformation Program (ATP).

Objective 8: Work with UW System to research the feasibility and associated costs for implementing a system-wide OmniSOC (a shared security operations center) and other cybersecurity-related services.