

SSU ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY PLAN FRAMEWORK

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BACKGROUND

The Academic Technology Advisory Council (ATAC) is charged with facilitating the development and implementation of a vision for effective utilization of technology in teaching, learning and scholarship at Sonoma State University. This plan presents ATAC's vision and implementation framework for enhancing the use of technology to achieve our academic mission. It will foster sound and innovative applications of academic technology and enable faculty, staff, and students to develop skills and knowledge for lifelong learning and professional growth.

An Imperative to Act

We begin to perceive the contours of a very different academy, one in which students are supported by networks of human and technological resources and thus, according to our own research findings, more likely to succeed. (Lovett, 2005).

Academic technology is the practice of facilitating teaching and improving learning by creating, using, or managing appropriate technological processes and resources. In addition to more traditional technologies, academic technology includes a multitude of online interfaces and environments that facilitate teaching, learning, collaboration, research, and scholarship.

The integration of academic technology in academic programs is critical for our institutional effectiveness. Technology enables collaboration, cooperation, interaction, and communication in powerful ways. Academic technology can enrich our curriculum with a variety of teaching and learning tools thereby attracting and retaining quality students. Technology can broaden access, offering the ability to serve a diverse range of learning styles. It can enhance the career preparation of our students, building lifelong learning capacity. Evolving academic technology creates new opportunities to build effective learning environments whether physical, virtual, or encompassing both in a seamless and content-rich learning experience.

Learners today have easy access to a staggering amount of content and knowledge suggesting the need to provide formal instruction in information, visual, and technological literacy. Faculty, in turn, will depend on support to keep current with evolving needs. With the increasing development and availability of tools to connect learners and scholars all over the world, teaching and scholarship are transcending national borders and creating opportunities for shared learning and content creation. The institutions that seize these opportunities will be more likely to secure their future, be competitive and achieve their academic mission in an environment of accelerating change.

In order to inform and guide the implementation and use of effective academic technology, Sonoma State University has embarked on a renewed academic technology planning process. The goal is to develop a plan that will support teaching, learning, and scholarship in the 21st century and align with the SSU Academic Strategic Plan and the University Strategic Plan. In addition, this plan responds to the national challenges deemed most critical to teaching and learning with technology [Educause, 2009]:

- Creating learning environments that promote active learning, critical thinking, collaborative learning, and knowledge creation
- Developing 21st century literacies (information, digital, and visual) among students and faculty
- Reaching and engaging today's learner
- Encouraging faculty adoption and innovation in teaching and learning with technology
- Advancing innovation in teaching and learning with technology in an era of budget cuts

VALUES

The best use of academic technology is to help faculty provide a quality education that focuses on the student and enables the learning, teaching, research, and creative scholarship that quality education requires. As such, Sonoma State University values:

- opportunities for innovations in teaching and business practices
- consideration of diverse teaching and learning styles
- collaboration and cooperation across campus entities toward common goals
- a 24/7 online instructional and collaborative environment
- flexible use of academic technology in varied teaching, research, and creative environments
- access to training and curriculum development options
- continuous improvement of campus communication practices
- tools, training, and resources to assess our effectiveness and student outcomes
- capacity for lifelong university connections
- confidence in the value of our electronic learning community

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Academic Technology Advisory Council has developed key principles to inform and measure future efforts.

- Principles, goals and priorities of academic technology strategic planning will be synchronized with institutional planning processes.
- Academic technology products, services, and projects will be measured and supported primarily for their benefit to the SSU educational mission, rather than mere technical sophistication.
- A balance will be maintained between requisite baseline infrastructure access for faculty, students, and staff and more advanced technology projects.
- Faculty, students, prospective students, and staff will have easy, well-supported electronic access to the data and information necessary to perform their university functions.
- The technology infrastructure required for these efforts will be maintained and refreshed by SSU.
- Adaptive/assistive technologies will be provided where appropriate to ensure access to academic programs and university services for students, faculty, staff, and the public.
- Training, professional development, and assessment will be supported as the foundation for successful application of academic technologies.
- The efficiencies of a one-size-fits-all approach will be balanced with unique or specialized academic technology computing needs, as appropriate, to support teaching, learning and research excellence.
- Campus-wide and system-wide academic technology efforts will be leveraged to accelerate the implementation of effective academic technology applications.
- Faculty, staff, and students will have a consultative role in academic technology decisions.
- Faculty scholarship and innovation associated with technology-assisted learning will be supported and recognized.

STRATEGIC AREA A

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING, LEARNING, and QUALITY OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Provide a reliable, scalable, and well-supported system for delivery of teaching and learning resources to accommodate a 24/7 world.

GOALS

1. Create a high-quality learning environment focused on student success by providing faculty with the technology tools and support necessary for the delivery of instruction.
2. Encourage, support and recognize alternative forms of instruction.
3. Promote the successful integration of pedagogy and technology through faculty and staff development opportunities.
4. Emphasize implementation of academic technology for students that can positively influence recruitment, retention, and student achievement and prepare them for adapting to changing technologies of the future.
5. Provide equal access to all faculty and students through ADA compliant accessibility of all learning resources.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Encourage effective use of academic technology for teaching and learning, as appropriate to discipline, through tenure, promotion, post-tenure and annual reviews.
2. Implement a sustainable program of intensive faculty and staff technology development, using a variety of models (summer institutes, summer stipends, workshops, personal assistance, effective models for staff development, instructional design support, among other means).
3. Provide professional skills in instructional design to assist and support faculty with curriculum design, redesign and innovation.

STRATEGIC AREA B

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Provide a reliable, scalable, and robust system of support for research, scholarly and creative activities.

GOALS

1. Encourage, recognize and support alternative forms of scholarship and dissemination of knowledge (research) by both faculty and students.
2. Ensure that faculty and students have access to academic technologies to support their research, scholarly and creative activity objectives
3. Provide training, technology expertise, and professional assistance with hardware and software applications as appropriate to respective disciplines and research objectives
4. Encourage student scholarship, research and creative activity through an environment that provides up-to-date, flexible, and relevant technologies.
5. Recruit faculty, as appropriate to discipline, who value the application of academic technology for effective teaching and research and who express an interest and commitment to development and maintenance of this knowledge.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Identify baseline technology requirements, as appropriate to discipline, to support excellence in faculty and student research and scholarship (e.g., adequate server space and file storage, faculty server data backup, access to research software and databases for research analysis and data manipulation, among other needs).
2. Ensure the dissemination of ATAC proceedings related to research and scholarship to ORSP, FSSP, PDS and relevant bodies to allow for timely and meaningful recommendations and response.

STRATEGIC AREA C

ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Accommodate the technology needs of faculty, students, and staff by implementing, maintaining, and continuously refreshing the basic building blocks of the technology environment.

GOALS

1. Create a strong connection between classroom and technology-enriched learning environments
2. Address discipline specific learning space and specialized technology needs utilizing an active program planning process.
3. Provide and maintain reliable and quality classroom, research, and laboratory technology that meets the needs of students and faculty
4. Provide assistive technologies that meet accessibility guidelines (i.e., Section 508)
5. Incorporate technology-enhanced teaching and learning facilities in all new and renovated buildings and spaces developed in consultation with faculty, staff, and students.
6. Address teaching and learning technology support for extended hours of instruction (evenings and weekends) and remote programs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Develop a process and action plan for identifying and prioritizing needs for classrooms, labs and special purpose teaching spaces using an active consultative process and aligned with School and discipline strategic plans.
2. Develop a procedure and action plan for new product procurement and/or development based on consultation with users (faculty, staff, and students) to identify potential solutions, specific implementations, and general issues.

STRATEGIC AREA D

SUSTAINABILITY and CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

An ongoing process should be implemented to identify, prioritize, and address academic technology needs at all levels, aligned with university planning and regularly assessed.

GOALS

1. Conduct surveys, on a regular and frequent cycle, of faculty, staff and students assessing the effectiveness of academic technology services and use the resulting data to adapt and improve services. Utilize the assessment tools built into technologies where appropriate.
2. Communicate clearly to the campus the results of annual surveys of faculty, staff, and student academic technology needs and convey action decisions.
3. Coordinate planning and budgeting for academic technology, with appropriate consultation, to ensure alignment with strategic planning, the minimum amount of duplication, and the greatest efficiency in the use of limited resources.
4. Improve communications and collaboration between and among faculty, staff and students both within and beyond the classroom regarding academic technology opportunities.
5. Analyze the SSU organizational structure for delivery of sustainable academic technology services and explore alternative management models for optimal service and support delivery.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Establish a locus for academic technology leadership within Academic Affairs, to guide and coordinate planning, implementation, and assessment of services and support.
2. Undertake a gap analysis as a priority action to provide a baseline for academic technology at SSU.
3. Establish funding for academic technology needs based on regular and rigorous assessment to affirm and refresh priorities.
4. Utilize the Academic Technology Advisory Council, with broad consultation, as a forum for gathering and prioritizing academic technology needs and promoting innovative uses of technology.

REFERENCES

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