Report on the University of West Florida Leadership Retreat of March 25, 2003

Dr. William H. Graves of Collegis framed and then facilitated a discussion designed to help President John Cavanaugh develop a short, focused list of projects designed to optimize the institutional academic results achieved through the use of technology. The outline below was not crafted during the discussion and has not been vetted with the participants. It is Graves’ synthesis of the discussion and reflects his understanding of the related, earlier discussion facilitated by President Cavanaugh at the University Planning Council meeting of March 5. The outline is intended to be the first step in an action plan for deploying technology resources and related professional services to help achieve strategic, measurable institutional academic outcomes from the application of technology.

Vision
The University of West Florida (UWF) will use technology in its academic programs and processes to:

• Improve student learning demonstrably.
• Be distinctive in pursuit of pedagogies conducive to active learning.
• Focus on and meet mission-related educational needs in the local community and the state of Florida.
• Be flexible and cost-effective from the student’s and the state’s perspectives.
• Distinguish the University among comprehensive universities in the southeast.

Vision-Related Measurable Objectives

• Increase the “profits” from degree and certificate programs which can be offered on a cost-recovery basis.
• Accommodate more enrollments without increasing the faculty workload.
• Increase the size of the first-year class.
• Strengthen the academic profile of the first-year class.
• Decrease the ratio of first-year students admitted to those who matriculate.
• Decrease the ratio of marketing and recruiting costs to the size of the incoming first-year class. Do the same for programs offered on a cost-recovery basis.
• Increase the retention rate (first-to-second-year persistence) and the undergraduate graduation rate.
• Decrease instructional costs for courses redesigned to increase the retention rate—see the next section for explanation.
• Increase enrolled-student satisfaction.
• Improve UWF’s standing in comparative ratings such as the one conducted by US News & World Report.

Two Strategies for Achieving the Vision-Related Objectives

Focus technology-related faculty support on the development of selected courses and academic programs designed to achieve measurable institutional goals.

• The Convenience-Market Strategy: Provide degree and certificate programs to meet educational needs in Florida’s convenience market of students unable or unwilling to participate in instructional delivery models constrained by significant requirements for real-time interaction among students and among student and their instructors. Candidate programs include:
  » Lateral-entry teacher preparation
  » MBA program
  » Maritime studies
  » Oceanography

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Other programs designed to meet educational needs identified by the Navy
- 2+2 programs based on partnership agreements with interested Florida community colleges
  - Liberal studies BA completion program
  - Undergraduate business program
  - Teacher preparation program
  - BS in nursing
- The Common-Course Redesign Strategy: Focus selectively on the 20-30 “common courses” for which enrollments aggregated across all course sections account in total for at least 35% of all enrollments at any time. Redesign selected courses both to increase learning outcomes and to reduce instructional costs—simultaneously. These courses will be selected from:
  - General education courses such as basic math and writing courses, introductory psychology, introductory biology, introductory chemistry, and so on.
  - Courses that are required in professional degree programs.
  - Developmental courses

Next Steps
- Obtain the sponsorship of the President’s cabinet for the objectives and strategies outlined above.
- In consultation with the deans, develop a selection process to identify programs, courses, and faculty participants for the projects to be undertaken in the “convenience-market strategy” and the “common-course redesign strategy.”
- Identify the resources required to achieve success. In the process, identify any gaps in the current resource base. Accordingly develop a resource plan 1) to reallocate resources and acquire needed new resources and 2) to organize and manage the total resources required to proceed.
  - Align the UPC-IT subcommittee’s information technology plan with the objectives and strategies outlined above.
  - Ensure that the course management system selected for central support is consistent with the above strategies—e.g., can be administered and supported on a 24x7 basis, either internally by OIT or externally, and can be affordably licensed within the University’s scenarios for working with community colleges, the Navy, and potential revenue-generating distribution channels for UWF course materials.
  - Ensure that the marketing, academic, student, and technology support resources required for success (market research, market planning, student recruitment, curriculum designers, instructional designers, course developers, online student services, 24x7 student/faculty help desk, etc.) and the resources and responsibilities of the CUTL intersect in consistent ways. Articulate the resources that will be focused on the projects envisioned above with the resources that will be focused on academic technology support as a faculty entitlement—the library model. Describe the limitations on the latter in terms of open-access services available to the faculty.
- Vet the overall project plan with the UPC.
- Develop tactical project plans with timelines, reporting schedules, and planning-update cycles.
- Begin the project efforts around July 1 with an eye toward piloting selected courses and programs in the Spring Semester of 2004.