1. Preamble

As noted in the charter of the University Planning Council Information Technology Committee, one of the Committee’s responsibilities is to “review annually the strategic plan of the Information Technology Services department, and the University Technology Plan.” This responsibility implies the necessity of a University-wide strategic plan for information technology, supportive of the University’s overall strategic plan.

Even a cursory scan of the UWF Strategic Plan reveals how integral and vital the strategic use of information technology is to the University’s goals and priorities. The very first priority under strategic goal one is “electronic and technology enhancements.” Indeed, information technology is a key driver and enabler in “enhancing the quality of the learning environment, academic experience, and student services” (priority 1.5) and developing “innovative curricula” (priority 2.2). It has been a major factor in the Students-First Initiative (priority 2.4). It is central to technology transfer (priority 3.2); providing comprehensive data for decision making (priority 3.3); and to enabling educational partnerships and community services, facilitating the work of research centers and institutes, and delivering continuing and distance education programs (priorities 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6). It is also a key driver in improving institutional effectiveness and performance (priority 4.5).

Utilizing the capabilities of information technology is thus a primary strategic issue for the University of West Florida. It is also an expensive and complex issue, demanding integrated planning and alignment of efforts and resources throughout the institution. This requires that UWF guide its investments in information technology with a clear strategy for identifying those investments that will result in the greatest possible benefit to the University community and the University’s strategic goals. The purpose of the University of West Florida’s Strategic Plan for Information Technology is therefore to describe the information technology strategies the University has chosen to best support its strategic plan, and to provide direction to all units of the University so they can implement their local information technology plans in alignment with the overall University plan.
2. **Vision for Information Technology**

A university is the quintessential knowledge and information organization, and thus information technology is a widespread planning and investment issue. This implies that the University’s vision for information technology will necessarily be somewhat general in nature. At the same time, any information technology strategy must first and foremost support the mission of the University, and thus the vision must also concentrate on areas of focus relevant to the UWF strategic plan. In UWF’s vision for information technology, these areas of focus are the support and improvement of:

- The primary activities of *teaching, learning, and research*.
- Delivery of *student services*.
- Engagement in *partnerships and community services*.
- Effective and efficient conduct of *administrative operations*.

Thus, the University of West Florida’s vision for information technology is *to be a recognized center of excellence in utilizing an integrated information technology environment to foster the creation and exchange of knowledge; to improve the delivery of services to students, faculty, staff, partners, and the community; and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative operations and the overhead processes associated with operating the University.*
3. **Information Technology Planning Framework**

The modern information technology environment is both widespread and complex, and so strategic planning for information technology is best done in the context of a reference model. Figure 1 depicts the reference model used in this document.

Note that the model is a layered model, with the foundation (bottom layer) of all IT strategic planning being the University’s strategic plan and the goals and priorities it identifies. The foundation purpose of information technology as a tool is to advance the strategic goals of the University and its functional units.

Likewise, the top layer of the model is comprised of the end users who utilize UWF’s information technology environment and are thus the true focus of the planned information technology services and capabilities. Traditionally, UWF’s IT environment has focused on students, faculty, and staff as the end clients. However, the changing higher education environment is broadening this target community of information technology users, to include groups such as prospective students; alumni; “nontraditional” students such as life-long learners who are not enrolled in formal degree programs; external research, business, and community partners; and even the general public. This broader definition of “University community” presents several challenges for IT planning and design.

Below the University community at the top of the model is the second layer of planning, comprised of the four focus areas upon which UWF’s vision for information technology concentrates: teaching, learning, and research activities; student services; administrative operations; and partnerships & community services. Strategic goals for information technology at this level drive all other elements of the strategic plan for information technology. Put another way, the four focus areas at this level are the subject of strategic planning; the lower layers are the focus of tactical planning aimed at implementing the strategic plans.
The four layers at the center, in aggregate, model the University’s information technology infrastructure, with both technology components and administrative components. The layer of infrastructure most directly related to users is ArgoNet network interface, which provides an integrated information technology services environment based on key services such as identification, authentication, and authorization of users; provision of key services such as data storage, web publishing, and electronic mail; directories; and security.

The ArgoNet environment is enabled by a physical and technical infrastructure of network and server equipment; physical cabling and wireless transmission equipment; supportive physical facilities such as data centers and communication rooms; and physical access facilities such as computer labs and technology-equipped classrooms.

Operation and support of this environment is provided by people-intensive support services that include help desk, consulting, training, equipment repair, monitoring, and engineering functions.

Administration of this component of University operations is a necessary function, and includes the framework for planning, policy, and management related to information technology.

The next section outlines strategies in the four focus areas for information technology at UWF in the context of this planning framework. Using the University’s planning model as defined in the University Planning Information System (UPIC), these strategies are expressed as a hierarchy of strategic goals, with related imperatives and priorities, as well as defined accountability measures to assess achievement.

Following that, the subsequent section outlines tactical planning priorities for the four areas of information technology infrastructure that serve these strategies.

Note: In this draft, only the first part of the next 2 sections is outlined, as an example for format and structure. Actual goals and priorities are to be defined by the Committee. ~mfd
4. **Information Technology Strategies and Priorities**

The University of West Florida envisions an integrated electronic environment, a “common space,” that enables all members of the University community to make use of networked and distributed information technology, information services, and information resources to realize the University’s mission – freed as much as possible from restrictions of time and location through innovative use of today’s global communication infrastructure.

4.1 **Teaching, Learning, and Research**

**Strategic Goals**

1. Provide all students and faculty with convenient access to the information technologies needed to conduct teaching, learning, and research functions. Further, insure this access and interaction with services and technologies is consistent across the institution.

2. Enable the “extended university” through a dependable technology infrastructure and support services that enable distance and distributed learning, and through tools and resources that are location-transparent to the end user.

3. Ensure that ample, consistent, and reliable support is provided for the integration and use of appropriate information technology in the curriculum of all academic disciplines.

**Strategic Imperatives**

1. Equip all classroom, laboratory, and collaboration facilities for the use of information technology tools and access to networked information resources.

2. Develop the technology and support infrastructure to deliver high-quality courses and programs to remote locations.

3. Design pedagogy tools and facilities so that programs can be as location and method transparent as possible.

4. Enable external teaching and research collaborations through high-bandwidth network connectivity with partner institutions.

**Strategic Priorities**

1. Implement a new Learning Management System to replace Prometheus.

   **Accountability Measures:**
   a. Installation of new system, migration of all courses to new system, and discontinuance of Prometheus and Prometheus license.
2. Complete the equipping of all classrooms with information technology access for the instructor, and establish life-cycle funding for ongoing maintenance of these facilities.

   Accountability Measures:
   a. Establish schedule for upgrade of classrooms, and track progress against schedule.
   b. Approval of life-cycle funding model, and establishment of budget with annual funding.

3. Establish base-level standardization of all student computer labs, to include integration with ArgoNet.

4. Establish UWF membership in Internet2, and high-bandwidth connectivity to the Internet2 backbone network.

Note: The remainder of this document is just random notes in this draft. ~mfd

4.2 Student Services

- Web-based electronic payments (credit cards).
- Complete ResNet to south-side dorms.
- Wireless access for students to facilitate use of personally owned equipment.
- Site licenses.
- Extend PQA to University-wide distributed printing platform.
- StudentsFirst priorities.

4.3 Partnerships and Community Services

4.4 Administrative Operations
5. **Information Technology Tactical Plans**

5.1 **ArgoNet Environment**

ArgoNet must be tolerant of diverse computing platforms and must provide access to global information resources.

5.2 **Information Technology Infrastructure**

Establish an Information Technology Infrastructure Master Plan that is coordinated with the Campus Master Plan.

5.3 **Information Technology Support Services**

Choose an IT services organizational model that will achieve a high degree of coordination across the University, and that can be held accountable. Also a model that minimizes the overall number of personnel required to provide high-quality support to a large user community, and enables IT support services to remain economically viable in the long term.

Promoting information technology fluency and literacy.

5.4 **Information Technology Planning, Policy, and Management**

**PLANNING**

**POLICY**

- Update policies
  - Acceptable use of information technology.
  - Electronic mail.
- New policies.
  - Responsible management of information technology.
    - Responsibilities of server administrators.
    - Responsibilities of lab administrators.
• Purchasing of information technology.
  o Baseline standards.

MANAGEMENT

FUNDING
• Life-cycle funding for infrastructure renewal. Highest priority is student support resources.
6. **Implementing the Vision**

Implementing this *Strategic Plan for Information Technology* requires an action plan for moving from our current state to the envisioned environment. The following steps are provided as a prioritized roadmap for implementing this vision.

1. Establish a coherent organizational strategy for information technology.
   - Life-cycle funding.
   - Technology and compatibility standards and purchasing mechanisms.
   - Better integrate with facilities master planning and budgeting.
   - Foster divisional, college, and departmental IT plans aligned with UWF plan.
   - Encourage student investment.

2. Adopt the maintenance and enhancement of the mission-critical information technology infrastructure as a top strategic investment priority for the University.

3. Reinforce the planning and governance structure that best fosters cooperation and alignment of information technology plans and investments.
   - Update policies.
   - Curriculum dev, faculty support, and distance learning.

4. Enact the organization structure most appropriate to deliver technology support to the entire University community.
   - Clarify role of the CIO.
   - Clarify central vs. distributed support.
   - Examine outsourcing of selected functions.

5. Establish information technology enabling partnerships with the community, external agencies, industry, and other higher education institutions.