UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
INFORMATION SERVICES
AND TECHNOLOGY

INFORMATION SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY
STRATEGIC UPDATE

Learning Technologies Ecosystem

The Goal: To create a responsive learning ecosystem that provides a powerful platform for teaching and innovation.

The Learning Technologies Ecosystem has made significant progress in four areas: governance, classroom and lab infrastructure, transitioning eClass to cloud infrastructure, and mobile assessment. The project team has formed a new Learning Technology Advisory Committee, and alongside the Student Lifecycle initiative, they've helped develop a technology adoption framework that will be used to guide and direct which services the University approves and how. On the learning spaces side, teams have successfully completed the first semester of their software virtualization pilot in labs. In classrooms, the teams have been creating a three-year plan to implement a new classroom standard. After performing technical feasibility testing in the fall, the project team received approval in December to transition eClass to cloud infrastructure. Finally, the eClass team has started developing a pilot for mobile assessment.

The next goals of the Learning Technologies Ecosystem are to complete the plan for classroom evergreening and present it for approval at the Information Technology Steering Committee for Teaching and Learning, successfully transition eClass to cloud infrastructure, complete an initial pilot for mobile assessment software, and entirely re-do lab infrastructure and provisioning.

Student Lifecycle

The Goal: To create a cohesive student lifecycle, governed and operated by the business area owners and valued by the student.

In the last six months, the Student Lifecycle team has been working with stakeholders to determine the needs of various groups across the University. The team investigated customer relationship management (CRM) software and defined what CRM means to the University, helped develop a technology adoption framework alongside the Learning Technologies Ecosystem initiative, and created a searchable Application Catalogue. The project team also expanded membership of the IT Steering Committee - Administration (ITSC-A) to include more members of the Student Lifecycle Advisory Group so that all parts of the student lifecycle can be represented. Last, the project team made adjustments to IT governance that allow changes made by the Student Lifecycle initiative to exist beyond the life of the project.

The objective of the Student Lifecycle team for the next six months will be to end the initiative, meaning its governance will be fully operationalized. The most critical goal will be ensuring the results of the initiative are made a permanent part of the institution. The Student Lifecycle team will also be working to determine how IST's Teaching and Learning group will play a part in the lifecycle.

RESET, RESHAPE, REFOCUS

Application and Data Integration

The Goal: To provide a dynamic and flexible foundation for exchanging data fluidly across applications and enable the transformation of data to information based on business purpose.

The Application and Data Integration team has spent the last six months formulating their project requirements and developing an understanding of products available in the marketplace. They've engaged with four different vendors in order to understand what their products do, what features or functions would benefit the University, and what the industry as a whole is offering. This discovery and requirements gathering will be used to explore what models the University could adopt to provide integration services, and the results will be incorporated into a request for proposal (RFP) in the spring. On the data standards side of the initiative, the team has been focused on two tasks: putting together a group of University representatives to provide feedback and input into the requirements, and determining how to facilitate and manage data governance around integration.

Going forward, the Application and Data Integration team plans to engage more of the University community to share information and collect feedback before going to market for a solution. They'll also continue comparing tools to ensure the right requirements are included for immediate need and scalability to future needs. That information will go into a document that is RFP-ready, and a recommendation report for how to move forward will be complete in spring 2018.

Cloud Adoption

The Goal: To establish a state-of-the-art platform that enables users to access, store, develop, and test computing capabilities through a secure, sustainable, and flexible environment.

The Cloud Discovery team has gained momentum by creating a cloud sandbox environment, engaging extended teams, and learning what they need to do to use cloud services. They have developed foundational pieces, including cost management, account set-up, and security. With the beginnings of these functional foundations in place, the team is now identifying value for IST and our clients. A new phase of the project, "Cloud Experiments," will allow more IST staff to participate, submit ideas, and develop experimental services in the cloud. The goal of the Cloud Experiments is to identify and test hypotheses that will allow IST to leverage the cloud to deliver services in a more effective and efficient manner. In February, the Cloud team started reaching out to IST staff for ideas to identify value and leverage the cloud. A number of experiments have been submitted already, and the team is still looking for more.

Over the next few months, the teams will be focused on working through the cloud experiments, testing cloud services, assisting with the migration of eClass to the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud, and developing recommendations for strategies on which services should be moved to the cloud, when to move them, and how.