Furman University
Computing and Information Services

A snapshot of technology at Furman: the 2010 CIS Annual Report

June 17, 2010
This report presents an opportunity to reflect on some of Furman’s information service accomplishments and progress over the past year. It also presents some plans for the year ahead. This “snapshot” of Furman’s information technology includes brief descriptions of projects including:

- New software tools for instruction,
- Improved help desk system,
- New web conferencing tools,
- Improved network reliability,
- A redesign of the campus web site,
- A new web content management system,
- A new web portal for campus information systems,
- An external review of security and privacy practices, and
- Plans for an upgraded and expanded wireless network.

Information technology presents both opportunities and challenges. While these challenges can sometimes seem formidable, the staff of Computing and Information Services are inspired by the University’s teaching and learning mission, and our talented community of students, faculty, and staff. We’re here to work with you, and we thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to improve Furman’s information services.

I am pleased to share this report with you, and welcome your questions and feedback.

Fredrick Miller
Chief Information Officer

Contents
1. Teaching and Learning
2. Sustainability
3. Technology Services
4. Network Improvements
5. Listening to You

And some fast facts...
1. Teaching and Learning

Computer lab upgrades, classroom presentation systems, software upgrades, technology assistance, and more...

New technology tools for teaching and learning
- Adobe Connect for web conferencing,
- Video streaming,
- Wordpress Blogs,
- Confluence Wiki software, and
- More Moodle tools coming...

Investigating the Amazon Kindle, Apple iPad, ebooks, and electronic distribution from the bookstore.

About the new Confluence WIKI system
- Faculty members Brian Goess and Greg Springsteen worked with their students to use wiki software to create a student authored e-textbook, and other learning resources, for both of Furman’s introductory courses in organic and bioorganic chemistry.
- Wade Shepherd and Mike Winiski presented at the national NITLE conference on Furman’s WIKI project.
- Coming: using the Confluence WIKI with Furman’s web content management system.
2. Sustainability

Furman is a leader in the sustainable use of information technology resources in higher education.

Furman participates in the Climate Savers Computing Initiative to have more energy efficient computer systems.

- 1170 of 2327 computer systems are Energy Star compliant (just over 50%).
- 24% using power management feature.
- The EPA Savings Calculator estimates that converting the remaining Furman computer systems to Energy Star will save another 234 tons of CO2 per year.

Print Management System Pilot

- In the Spring of 2010 Computer and Information Services staff installed a new pilot system to track printer use in computer labs around campus. This system tracks how much individuals print to Furman printers. The pilot will help us gauge how much paper could be saved from printing less in Furman computer labs.

Virtual Servers let Furman’s datacenter use less energy, generate less heat, and let us deploy servers faster.

- Over 2/3 of Furman servers virtual; our target is 80%.
- We expect to see over $30,000 per year energy savings (>430 CO2 tons.)
- Other virtual server benefits include: less air conditioning, allows for centralizing distributed servers, uses less space, saves hardware $, and more...

Virtual Servers let Furman’s datacenter use less energy, generate less heat, and let us deploy servers faster.
3. Technology services

New Campus Web Portal (aka WebAdvisor or Arms)
- Improved interface for Furman web services.
- Live on March 1.
- New server will speed performance (coming in July.)
- New name: My.Furman (coming in July.)

New University Homepage and Web Content System
- Live in October 2009.
- Simplifies updating web pages.
- Provides a unified look to University pages.
- Over 30 departments now using the system.

Administrative Systems Updates
- Working with administrative systems vendors to review Furman business processes.
- Financial Aid now prepares aid packages faster and more efficiently.

Security and privacy
- Established privacy, security, and service level standards for technology service contracts.
- Conducted quarterly external audits of server security.

New Help Desk e-Request system
- “like Fed-Ex tracking for help desk calls.”
- Look up your help request, and comment.
- Available from the portal and at help.furman.edu.
- Aids reporting and service monitoring.
4. Network improvements

The Furman campus network is vital to all our information services. We’re working to make it better.

**Wireless**
- Tested wireless systems from two alternative vendors.
- Added wireless to Blackwell and McBee residences.
- Created a plan for improving and expanding the campus wireless network. This plan includes providing coverage for all residence rooms.
- *Switching the campus wireless system to the new, faster, “N” wifi standard.*

**Networking**
- Reengineered the campus network for improved reliability.
- Installed tracking systems to monitor and report on campus network and Internet performance.
- Internet connection uptime improved to over 99%.
- Improved the Virtual Private Networking system for more reliable and secure connections from off campus.
- *Investigating adding additional high speed network bandwidth.*

**Telephone**
- *Preparing to replace the old campus voicemail system for improved reliability and added features.*
5. Listening to you

Techqual Survey
- Faculty perceptions of service quality improved.
- Growing faculty and staff concern about FirstClass; partially attributed to a FirstClass failure at the start of the Fall 2009 semester.
- Students continue to want improved and expanded wireless coverage, especially in residence halls.

Information Technology Governance
- Information Technology Advisory Committee
- Academic Computing Committee
- Administrative Systems Advisory Group

Communications
- CIS blog and Furman_CIS twitter account.
- Campus faculty and staff liaisons: meeting in person and online via Adobe Connect.
- Investigating alternative email systems (e.g. Gmail).

Training
- Over 50 training sessions for faculty and staff.
- Online training sessions via Adobe Connect.
- Web Content Management System training.
- Working with the Center for Teaching and Learning to publicize NITLE resources for faculty.
Fast facts…

- Furman owns over 2300 computer systems.
- Campus information services run on over 100 servers.
- The campus network uses two 100 megabit circuits to connect to the Internet (i.e., 200 megabits per second.)
- The new campus wireless plan calls for using more than 870 wireless access points (up from the current 416.)
- In March and April of 2010, over 490,000 square feet of paper was printed in Furman computer labs. That’s enough paper to cover more than 8 football fields.
- Furman has more than 150 locations with multimedia and projection systems.
- Furman stores about 30 terabytes of data in its datacenter.
- The Help Desk handles over 10,000 support calls per year.
- Computing and Information Services’ 28 professional staff, and 24 student workers, provide 62 information technology services for our student, faculty and staff community of more than 3400 people.
Thanks...

Computing and Information Services Governance  
2009-2010

Academic Computer Committee
- Pat Pecoy (chair)
- Chris Healy
- Ross McClain
- Renita Schmidt
- Pongracz Sennyey
- Greg Springsteen
- John Beckford
- Fred Miller
- Amy Blackwell
- Susan Dunnnavant
- Jane Love
- Maggie Milat
- Scott Salzman

Student staff 2009-2010
- Clayton-Will Boykin
- Justin Brown
- Albert Copeland
- Sederrik Cunningham
- Chelsea Curtis
- Abigail Delahoyd
- Ben Delahoyde
- Elizabeth Gay
- Donnie Galamore
- Brian Gardner
- Anastasia Halkias
- Sarah Hamilton
- David Keller
- Hammad Khan
- Matthew Knight
- Desi Lee
- Channing McLeod
- Mary Catherine Pitts
- James Rapley
- Brian Schwind
- Tersoo Uhaa
- Austin Whisnant
- Terrence Witzke

Information Technology Advisory Committee
- Fred Miller (chair)
- Tom Kazee (ex-officio)
- Janis Bandelin
- John Beckford
- Bill Berg
- Amy Blackwell
- Scott Derrick
- Susan Dunnnavant
- Jana Grimes
- Pat Pecoy
- Don Pierce
- Linda Sarrant
- Nancy Spitler

Administrative Systems Advisory Group
- Randy Dill (chair)
- Brett Barclay
- Amy Barnhill
- Brad Barron
- Joy Brown
- Janie Burton
- Monica Byrnes
- Connie Carson
- Emily Murphy
- Don Pierce
- Brad Pochard
- Helen Reynolds
- Linda Sarrant
- Forrest Stuart

http://cis.furman.edu