



Campus Update

From Chris Bailey

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As LCC moves forward with its major initiatives for the current year and the future, we have identified another critical initiative for our list – *stabilization of our campus information technology systems and processes*.

I wanted to share the work that is currently underway and how members of the campus community can assist in a program review and the development of a strategic master plan to better serve our students, faculty and staff.

The addition of a new director and two network technicians this summer, plus financial investments in equipment, has enabled us to tackle several important improvements. After an initial review of current systems, a backup server has been installed to minimize the impact of network disruptions. Connections to the state system have been strengthened, old security processes have been updated or eliminated and campus email has been transitioned to a new Outlook exchange server. All of these steps will improve the efficiency of our network and processes while also preparing us for installation of a new Voice Over Internet Protocol phone system and eventually connection to the State CTC system's new computer network and services (called the ctLink project).

Over the past several weeks, a consultant has been working with the Information Services team to gather their input about our systems and processes in order to create work plans and training to improve service to the campus. Soon, IT experts from our state board office will be on campus to review and analyze our network and systems and then recommend changes that will help align campus technology with industry best practices and improve our connections to the state and outside services.

The rapid changes in technology in recent years and the need to rely more heavily on online systems for learning and services has increased demands on our campus information services at the same time budget cuts have impacted staffing and equipment.

The good news, just like the economy we have turned the corner and are moving ahead. But we still have a long way to catch up and then keep pace with ever advancing technology demands. Here's where we can use your help.

A new Technology in Education Committee, with representation from all campus groups, began meeting in November. Its focus is to identify and prioritize campus technology needs and requests as they relate to college strategies and to report to the Cabinet for consideration of further actions. You can review the committee's charge, membership and monthly minutes on the Internal section of the website under Committees.

An Open Forum for the campus will be held in the near future to gather input on technology needs and priorities from all faculty, staff and students. This information, combined with recommendations from our consultants and the committee, will be used to draft a two-year Technology Strategic Master Plan.

The plan will follow our established process through Cabinet, Governance Council and campus-wide review before final adoption. Going forward, the plan will be considered in setting LCC's annual priorities and it will be reviewed and updated each year.

The perfect storm of enrollment demands, technology changes and resource limitations have combined to swamp our campus computer systems. Fortunately, we have a crew of dedicated faculty and staff with a proven track record of overcoming adverse circumstances with perseverance and innovative problem solving.

Thank you for your continuing dedication in making Lower Columbia College an admired, and envied, institution within our system.