Information Technology Services
Strategic Plan
2018-2021
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Executive Summary

The Information Technology Services (ITS) Department of Bemidji State University (BSU) and Northwest Technical College (NTC) was restructured in January 2017 to report to the Vice-President of Finance and Administration.

Work began on a new strategic plan in August 2017 which involved meetings, discussions, and surveys with a diverse group of faculty, staff, and students from both BSU and NTC. Mission and Vision statements, Priority Goals, and accompanying Action Items were created as part of this process. This document contains these findings and recommendations.

The Strategic Planning team realized that planning for the future can be challenging in the ever-changing world of technology; and that the next generation of students will always have greater expectations than those that came before them. The strategic plan was created to supplement the university and college strategic plans—guiding the IT department over the next three years (2018–2021).

Mission Statement

To provide Information Technology tools, support, and services that enhance educational and workplace experiences and values.

Vision Statement

We provide exceptional customer service, infrastructure reliability, efficient use of resources, and appropriate security oversight while engaging with our communities and partners.

Priority Goals

- **End-User Support**: Provide exceptional service and support to our end users -- students, faculty, and staff.
- **Campus and Community Engagement**: Engage and inform both campuses and the greater Bemidji community.
- **Security**: Ensure the secure use of IT resources.
- **Infrastructure**: Build and utilize an IT infrastructure that supports success.
- **IT Team Development**: Build and foster a cohesive and effective IT team.

The IT Department will incorporate the Mission, Vision, and the five Priorities into their daily work, and remain involved with the overall BSU/NTC Strategic Plans, Master Academic Plans, and capital bonding projects. They will continue to provide outstanding service to our students, faculty and staff.

Respectively Submitted,

Karen Snorek
Vice President of Finance & Administration
Recognition of Planning Participants

Thank you to all the students, faculty, staff, and administration for providing input through several strategic planning meetings and discussions. Many individuals spent hours preparing and participating in structured meetings throughout the planning cycle. We couldn’t have done this with their support!

Core Team

Andy Bartlett, Comm & Marketing
Marie Bock, Information Technology Services
Robb Carothers, ITS
Deb Cornell, ITS
Peter Gable, ITS/Student
Lisa Hofstad, Foundation
Linda Holliday, IMPACT Minnesota
Beth Jensen, eLearning
Lynn Johnson, Center of Extended Learning
Sachel Josefson, Technology, Art & Design
Pete McDonnell, Library
Paul Muller, Records
Tom Skime, Theatre
Karen Snorek, Finance and Admin/ITS
Gus Vettleson, Math (NTC)

Participants

Andrew Wilkinson, ITS
Allie Ferguson, ITS/Student
Anna Carlson, Sustainability
Anna Hansmeyer, ITS/Student
Barb Erickson Capes, Health Services
Belinda Lindell, Procurement
Bev Hodgson, Records
Bill Blackwell, American Indian Resource Center
Bob Quandt, Chemistry
Bonnie Higgins, College of Business, Mathematics, and Science
Brian Jambor, ITS
Brodie Karger, ITS
Cherish Hagen Swanson, International Program Center
Colleen Greer, College of Individual and Community Health
Craig DuMarc, ITS
Darrin Strosahl, Academic Affairs (NTC)
Deb Peterson, Affirmative Action/Accreditation
Derek Olson, ITS/Student
Derek Webb, Math and Computer Science
Faith Hensrud, President’s Office
George McConnell, Grad Studies
Geri Olson, ITS
Jackie Carroll, President’s Office
Jennifer Theisen, ITS
Jesse Grant, Student Life & Success
Jim Barta, College of Arts, Education, and Humanities
John Truedson, Physics
Kelli Stegall, TRIO
Kierstin Hoven, Campus Rec
Kody Hagen, ITS
Kris Engesather, ITS
Kristi Karsel, Distance MN
Lesa Lawrence, Financial Aid
Lucas Celley, ITS/Student
Margie Giauque, Career Services
Maria Eastman, Disability Services
Marla Patriss, Foundation
Mary Fairbanks, Nursing
Matt Buresh, ITS
Megan Zothman, HR
Melissa Columbus, ITS
Michelle Frenzel, Enrollment Management
Mike Mulry, Foundation
Mike Smith, ITS
Nina Johnson, Hobson Memorial Union
Patrick Lee, Library
Randy Westhoff, Academic Affairs
Randy Ludeman, Residential Life
Robin Gullickson, Records
Ron Beckstrom, Business Office
Rosanne Erickson, ITS
Russell Hemstock, ITS
Sandy Beck, Building Maintenance
Scott Faust, Comm & Marketing
Scott Theisen, ITS
Shane Jensen, ITS (NTC)
Theresa Eckstein, ITS
Tony Peffer, Academic & Student Affairs
Tracy Dill, Athletics
Travis Barnes, Physical Plant
Zach Johnson, Advising Success Center

Special thanks to Linda Holliday, principal consultant at Impact Minnesota, for facilitating this process. Impact Minnesota’s mission is to provide the highest quality consulting services in order to help nonprofits, for profits and public organizations make a meaningful impact on the people and communities around us.

www.impactminnesota.com
IT landscape/demographic overview

Department organization
The work of the Information Technology Services (ITS) department is divided into two areas, both of which serve BSU and NTC needs: Infrastructure & Development and Tech Support & Academic Technology.

- **Infrastructure and Development** is responsible for programming, network infrastructure, server administration (on premise and cloud), network and IT security, VOIP phones, print and imaging. Web Services is also a part of this area, and is responsible for BSU’s and NTC’s public and internal websites and web server configuration.

- **Tech Support & Academic Technology** is responsible for the help desk (end-user support and service management), classroom technology planning, computer labs and computer classrooms, desktop and mobile device administration, software and hardware licensing, and end-user purchasing.

The leadership structure of the department is organized to promote these function areas. Each has their own supervisor who also shares operational duties within the department. The supervisors report to the CIO of the department; who reports to the VP of Finance and Administration.

The department has had a difficult time attracting long-term IT leadership (CIO). Over the last 5 years, BSU has hired two CIOs and appointed 3 interim CIOs. The current CIO has been on leave since spring semester 2016. Currently, the VP of Finance and Administration is acting interim CIO.

The Infrastructure and Development supervisor position was vacated in 2014, and attempts at filling that position resulted in 2 failed searches. In 2018, the Infrastructure and Development supervisor position was permanently filled.

Students and Academic landscape:
BSU has approximately 3350 on-campus students and 1850 off-campus and online students. NTC has about 354 on-campus students, and 413 online students.

BSU students pay $10/credit and NTC students pay $8/credit in Technology fees. This fee is used to acquire, upgrade, maintain and enhance the technology that supports student academics and activities, including Lab Computers, Software Licensing, Printers, Network Infrastructure, and Tech Support.

There are 2 large public computer labs on BSU campus: AC Clark library and Beaver Lounge. Computers in these labs have ITS’ complete software library installed on them. There are also over 80 departmental labs on campus that support specialized instruction and instrumentation (3d printers, microscopes, mapping, modeling software, etc.). NTC has a number of public computer areas, computer classrooms, and specialized equipment labs.

Support for the Learning Management System, D2L Brightspace, is dependent on user type. Student support of D2L is provided by ITS Tech Support. Faculty support is provided by eLearning, a department of the Center of Extended Learning (CEL).

ITS also supports various purchased academic and infrastructure platforms on campus. These include student success software, Starfish; survey research platform, Qualtrics; productivity suite, Office 365 and an online class video distribution system, Panopto.
ITS uses a variety of methods to stay in touch with students and employees on campus, including direct meetings with faculty and offices, students via informal chats, surveys, and student senate meetings; and periodic town-hall style workshops and informational sessions with campus.

*Landscape Document Cont.*

**Support**

Tech Support strives to provide Tier 1 (first touch), Tier 2 (advanced technical troubleshooting), and Tier 3 (expert consultation) support for all areas of BSU and NTC campuses: Students, Faculty, Staff, and special events groups.

Through the use of IT service management (ITSM) tools, ITS receives, categorizes, routes/elevates, resolves, and notifies clients of all IT-related incidents and support questions.

ITS recently updated its ITSM software to *Cherwell*, a cloud-based service managed by the System Office. Cherwell is based on *ITIL* (Information Technology Infrastructure Library), a set of detailed practices for IT service management that focuses on aligning IT services with the needs of the business. The foundation of ITIL is having a detailed Service Catalog and associated Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that specify what ITS’ commitments are to campus and expected resolution times.

Due to liability issues, ITS does not work on personal devices (not owned by the institution). In cases where a personally-owned device requires service, ITS will refer an end user to a local service center.

**Community engagement/involvement**

ITS is involved in supporting community initiatives and events including the establishment of the first regional chapter of the *Girls who Code* program, “*Hackfest*” Bemidji coding completion, and the annual *Robotics Olympics* competition. Many staff also participate in community volunteer opportunities.

**Trends on the Horizon for ITS (Opportunities and Challenges)**

- **IT Leadership and staffing needs.** How can BSU/NTC attract and retain quality ITS leadership and staff? Are there new ways to approach our department organization? How can we more closely integrate our staff to create better and more meaningful team cohesion and unity?

- **Cloud.** Does it make sense to invest in local IT hardware and infrastructure, when a managed Cloud solution exists? Cloud platforms reduce upfront hardware and maintenance (warranty, upgrade) costs, and replace them with predictable monthly fees.

- **ITIL.** ITIL prescribes a service model of continual service improvement. BSU/NTC ITS Department is investing in ITIL as a business services model and in ITIL training for staff. The Cherwell implementation will reinforce ITIL principles.

- **Admin vs. Standard user accounts.** Coming up with a process to accommodate faculty research while maintaining security of university assets. How do we prevent computer processes from running with elevated credentials, yet still allowing free academic exploration?

- **Data Classification.** Review of all data on campus to assign classification rankings and ownership rules. Who should have access to what data? How is data transferred between employees? What constitutes “highly restricted data”? Multi-year project.
• **Next-gen Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP) -- ISRS.** System Office initiative that will have tremendous impact to entire state (not just IT). This is the replacement of the ISRS system. It is still uncertain the extent of interruption or adjustment that each campus will be asked to undergo as the new replacement comes online. Anticipate considerable investment.

• **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Mobile Device management (MDM).** How can ITS provide secure and meaningful solutions to students and employees that bring their own devices to campus? Examples include: Print anywhere from anything (cloud print queues), IT security controls in case of employee separation or lost/stolen devices, managed deployment of University devices – make sure devices are secure, encrypted, and apps are licensed appropriately.

• **Security.** There will be many security challenges coming in the next 3-5 years. How will ITS be positioned to plan, confront, and respond to evolving threats?

• **Software licensing.** How does ITS balance requests for software installations vs legal requirements from the General Counsel or Attorney General’s office? Should ITS be involved in this process?

• **Streamlined services.** How can ITS improve, streamline, or reduce requirements for clients requesting services or support from ITS?
Information Technology Strategic Framework 2018-2021

Mission Statement
To provide Information Technology tools, support and services that enhance educational and workplace experiences and value.

Vision Statement
We provide exceptional customer service, infrastructure reliability, efficient use of resources and appropriate security oversight, while engaging with our communities and partners.

Priorities & Goals:

Priority 1: End-User Support
Provide exceptional service and support to our end users.
Goal 1: Educate end users on IT tools and resources
Goal 2: Provide timely and transparent communication and IT solutions to our end users

Priority 2: Campus and Community Engagement
Engage and inform both campuses and the greater Bemidji community.
Goal 1: Increase IT communication across both campuses
Goal 2: Increase IT engagement across both campuses
Goal 3: Increase IT engagement in the greater Bemidji community

Priority 3: Security
Ensure the secure use of IT resources.
Goal 1: Promote a culture that balances security needs and academic freedom
Goal 2: Help ensure the protection of data

Priority 4: Infrastructure
Build and utilize an IT infrastructure that supports success.
Goal 1: Ensure reliable access to the network and computing resources
Goal 2: Ensure accessible and reliable technology tools for students in all learning environments
Goal 3: Move towards a more sustainable cloud environment

Priority 5: IT Team Development
Build and foster a cohesive and effective IT team.
Goal 1: Invest in and support the development of IT leadership and staff
Goal 2: Foster a cohesive and effective team, with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
Goal 3: Increase the value of and opportunities for IT student employees.
Priority & Goal 1: End-User Support

To provide exceptional service and support to our end users.

Goal 1: Educate end users on IT tools and resources

- **Action Item 1**: By Spring 2019, develop and utilize a thorough IT on and off-boarding process for employees.
- **Action Item 2**: By Spring 2019, develop and utilize IT Orientation resources for students.
- **Action Item 3**: Beginning Fall 2018, work with Human Resources and other departments to develop and offer effective, relevant IT training opportunities each semester.
- **Action Item 4**: By Fall 2019, promote awareness of and increase use of the ITSM/ticketing tool.

Goal 2: Provide timely and transparent communication and IT solutions to our end users.

- **Action Item 1**: By Spring 2019, develop and utilize a comprehensive website service request process in conjunction with the Office of Communications and Marketing.
- **Action item 2**: Beginning Fall 2018, reduce the number of printer tickets by 25 percent and the number of printers by 5 percent each year.
- **Action Item 3**: Beginning Spring 2018, identify and utilize appropriate IT staffing levels prior to the start of each semester and as vacancies occur.
Priority & Goal 2: Campus and Community Engagement

Engage and inform both campuses and the greater Bemidji community.

Goal 1: Increase IT communication across both campuses
- **Action Item 1:** Beginning Fall 2018, provide an e-newsletter and update the IT website at the beginning of every fall and spring semester or as major changes occur.
- **Action Item 2:** Beginning Fall 2018, provide an executive update on IT’s vision and progress at the beginning of every fall and spring semester.
- **Action Item 3:** Beginning Fall 2018, IT will attend at least one non-IT department meeting each semester.

Goal 2: Increase IT engagement across both campuses
- **Action Item 1:** By Spring 2019, create and utilize a Technology Fee Committee.
- **Action Item 2:** Beginning Fall 2018, evaluate the location of IT staff on campus at least once per year to ensure we are located in area(s) that best meet the needs of our end users.
- **Action Item 3:** Beginning Fall 2018, every IT staff member will participate in at least one internal BSU/NTC committee or activity each year.
- **Action Item 4:** Beginning Spring 2019, convene relevant stakeholders from outside the IT team to collaborate on major IT projects and issues.

Goal 3: Increase IT engagement in the greater Bemidji community
- **Action Item 1:** Beginning Fall 2018, encourage IT Staff to participate individually or as a group in at least one greater Bemidji community event each year.
- **Action Item 2:** By Fall 2020, promote awareness of IT services and facilities available to off-campus constituents.
Priority & Goal 3: Security

Ensure the secure use of IT resources.

Goal 1: Promote a culture that balances security needs and academic freedom.
- **Action Item 1**: By Fall 2020, implement an administrative credential solution.
- **Action Item 2**: Beginning Fall 2018, provide IT security information and tips to employees and students twice per semester.

Goal 2: Help ensure the protection of data.
- **Action Item 1**: By Spring 2019, offer and promote IT security training for all employees and students each semester.
- **Action Item 2**: Beginning Fall 2018, review IT staff security rights each year.
- **Action Item 3**: Beginning Fall 2019, review security rights with at least one other department each year.
Priority & Goal 4: Infrastructure

*To build and utilize an IT infrastructure that supports success.*

Goal 1: Ensure reliable access to the network and computing resources
- **Action Item 1:** Beginning Fall 2018, update IT core infrastructure such as cabling and network equipment whenever any new construction, renovation or remodeling is occurring on campus.
- **Action Item 2:** By Fall 2021, update at least 25 percent of aging fiber optics on campus.

Goal 2: Ensure accessible and reliable technology tools for students in all learning environments
- **Action Item 1:** Beginning Fall 2018, gather input each semester regarding lab and classroom technology needs for the same semester next year.
- **Action Item 2:** By Spring 2020, develop and utilize an annual life-cycle plan for all end-point equipment: from acquisition to disposal.

Goal 3: Move towards a more sustainable cloud environment
- **Action Item 1:** Beginning Spring 2019, conduct a cloud-analysis with every new service and equipment request.
- **Action Item 2:** By Fall 2020, utilize cloud-storage for 100 percent of individual (non-shared) files.
- **Action Item 3:** Beginning Fall 2019, migrate at least one department to digital imaging/archiving each year.
Priority & Goal 5: IT Team Development

Build and foster a cohesive and effective IT team.

Goal 1: Invest in and support the development of IT leadership and staff
  - **Action Item 1:** By Fall 2019, create a Professional Development Plan (PDP) for every IT employee. Review and update PDPs quarterly.
  - **Action Item 2:** Beginning Fall 2018, leadership supports the use of time and resources to allow staff to participate in meaningful staff development opportunities at least once per year.
  - **Action Item 3:** Beginning Fall 2018, review relevant strategic plan items at each all IT staff meeting.

Goal 2: Foster a cohesive and effective team, with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
  - **Action Item 1:** By Fall 2020, identify all core and critical IT functions. Train backup staff to perform these functions. Backup staff to perform functions on a regular basis.
  - **Action Item 2:** Beginning Fall 2018, leadership supports the use of time and resources to allow staff to participate in meaningful team-building or social activities at least once per year.

Goal 3: Increase the value of and opportunities for IT student employees.
  - **Action Item 1:** By Fall 2019, create and implement a mentorship effort for all new student employees.
  - **Action Item 2:** By Spring 2019, create position descriptions for all student employees.
  - **Action Item 3:** Beginning Fall 2018, provide customer service and technical training opportunities for student employees at least twice per semester.
Addendum: ITS Organizational Chart

Information Technology Services BSU/NTC
4/1/2019
Addendum: Student Survey Summary

What hardware or support services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)
- Printing from personal devices: 81%
- Repair service for personal devices: 55%
- Green IT initiatives: 51%

What lab or classroom services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)
- Public computer labs on campus: 67%
- State-of-the-art technology in classrooms: 58%
- Diverse software base installed on lab computers: 50%

What hardware or support services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)
- Repair service for personal devices: 100%
- Printing from personal devices: 78%
- BSU/NTC mobile app: 57%

What lab or classroom services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)
- Public computer labs on campus: 71%
- Diverse software base installed on lab computers: 50%
- State-of-the-art technology in classrooms: 50%

Experience with IT staff:

- Knowledgeable, Efficient, Professional: 85% averaged rating

Contacted IT?
- Yes: 53%
- No: 47%

Interaction method
- Walk-up: 69%
- Online: 31%
- Phone call: 6%
- Email: 5%
- Lab support: 3%
- KB was accurate: 1%

Institution
- BSU: 85%
- NTC: 15%

Course delivery
- Online: 31%
- On campus: 69%

BSU 85%
NTC 15%
### What are your greatest challenges at BSU/NTC?

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<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Network Accessibility or Speed</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too Many Credentials</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>Classes are Not Recorded</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Etextbook or External Resources Support</td>
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<td>Personal Device Support</td>
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<td>Financial Hardship</td>
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<td>Use of D2L Brightspace</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Basic Computer Knowledge</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adequate Technology in Classroom</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful Collaboration Tools</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication from IT Services</td>
<td>3</td>
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### What suggestions would you offer BSU/NTC IT Services to better serve students?

- **I would like to see start up "how to" video's on how to use D2L at the beginning of the semesters for students who are new to the program.**
- **Better WiFi and faster computers**
- **I think you guys are doing a wonderful job. The only complaints I have heard or experienced are that the wifi gets slow or disconnects frequently.**
- **Make sure that the WiFi is strong at all points around campus.**
- **ITS department needs to be available on the weekends. If on-line students have issues over the weekend (which is when most of the homework is being done) and nobody is available to take their call or email, then a whole weekend is wasted and/or assignments can't get turned in and the points are missed, which affects their grades.**
- **When something changes make a bigger advertise about it...**
- **Just improving the facilities that are offered. I think the groundwork is there but its just poorly up kept and orchestrated so we have advanced resources available that are not working because they simply are not set up.**
- **I think printing from personal devices would be great but since IT can barely get printers working in general maybe that’s a not the best request.**
- **I think this survey is a really good way to get feedback though and encourage IT to reach out and get opinion more often to help them improve what REALLY is important.**
- **Instructors that are trained better with technology, especially with external websites like HESI and Elsevier.**
- **The computer skills for medical office, excel, and assess program is awful. I dropped the class because of it. (Pearson MyIT.)**
- **Phase in a fee for printing. Perhaps allow each student a budget for printing, after which they need to pay per sheet used.**
- **Have a mobile app for the ability to quickly check D2L and other BSU services on the go.**
- **Better WiFi and faster computers**

**Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College ITS Strategic Plan**

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Addendum: Employee Survey Summary

What hardware or support services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)

- Accessibility of printers: 86%
- Regularly updated computers (consistent refresh cycle): 76%
- Green IT initiatives that reduce BSU/NTC’s ecological impact: 47%
- Other: 39%

What IT services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)

- Straightforward process to request services and products from ITS dept.: 95%
- Email spam filtering and detection: 76%
- Support of personal computing devices: 43%
- Other: 38%

What web development services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)

- Timely updates to core website services: 79%
- Simple self-management of dept., office or faculty websites: 74%
- Regular training on web management tools: 54%
- Mobile app: 42%

What lab and classroom services are important to you? (Extremely or Very important)

- Modern technology in classrooms: 73%
- Log-in time to computers: 68%
- Regularly refreshed lab computers: 54%
- Public computer labs: 46%
What are your greatest challenges at BSU/NTC?

- No time to learn new technology (38%)
- Timely completion of ITS requests (38%)
- Updating websites (37%)
- After-hours support (34%)
- Training opportunities (29%)
- Knowledgeable staff (26%)
- Awareness of IT resources (25%)
- Network/infrastructure (21%)
- Computer updates (20%)
- Printing (17%)
- ITS leadership (16%)
- Rapid ITS change (13%)
- Resource planning (11%)
- Communication from ITS (11%)
- Lab maintenance (9%)
- Other (9%)
- Willingness of ITS to partner (7%)
- Scheduling an AV event (9%)

What suggestions would you offer BSU/NTC IT Services to better serve employees?

**A fast response plan so that during a catastrophic classroom technology issue...** an ITS member is able to go directly to a classroom and give assistance as soon as called...

**We need more IT help desk staff (not student workers) to support all of the faculty and students on campus. This department is WAY understaffed.**

Make sure communications from the IT department are understandable. Too often they’re way too technical so I just delete them and take no action.

**Add additional staff. Point person / Technician designated for particular programs / buildings.**

It’s frustrating to have to explain problem to student worker and then have to explain it again to IT staff. Prefer to have option to talk directly to staff member who will be solving the problem. ... Staff should be more visible.

**Better understanding and support for MAC users.**

**NTC needs FT person on staff so there’s someone available to manage immediate issues that arise for students or faculty. When Shane is off-site, we have virtually no support. I often am unable to resolve the issue with a phone call to BSU’s help desk...**

**“HAVE SHANE ON NTC CAMPUS SO WE CAN USE HIM WHEN WE NEED HIM”**

**We do better without a CIO. The past 4 CIO’s have each had their own personal agenda and taken BSU/NTC in a different direction from which we had to recover after each left. The current interim structure seems to be working better reporting to a VP and I recommend keeping it very similar to this structure.**

**“More regularly scheduled training on Office 365 tools and existing & new technologies.”**

“Thanks for the lunch and learn sessions. Keep that going, please!”

“Hands-on training.”

“Regular trainings on the Microsoft suite tools...”

“More in-person contact.”

**“Off campus support & training”**

“...my students are able to get help during the week but many are online so have issues on weekends too.”

“IT regular staff always available here at NTC. Student workers are great - but not always helpful...”

“More training for student workers on Office Suite programs...”