ANNUAL REPORT

**VERMONT STATE COLLEGES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SHARED SERVICES**

VERMONT
— STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM —

a year's overview

The Vermont State Colleges Information Technology (IT) team came together as Shared Services IT in January 2023. This report highlights our achievements since becoming one IT team under Chief Information Officer Kellie Campbell.

Our early accomplishments were related to building our new organization. We made a new website where we share information about our IT team and help articles for the VSC community. The website is a 24x7 source of support for technology questions. We also created a catalog of our services, which helps us define the service levels we provide to the institution. Last summer, the IT team came together to develop six strategic pillars that guide our work and wrote an IT Strategic Plan.

We have organized this Annual Report based on our six strategic pillars.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

System Affordability and Sustainability

Teaching and Learning

IT Operational Procedures and Governance

User Experience

Safety, Security, and Compliance

Data as an Asset

SYSTEM AFFORDABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

A priority in coming together as one IT team was to identify opportunities for cost savings and determine a path toward future sustainability. Our Learning Spaces Technologies team recognized the need to inventory classroom equipment across all campuses and academic centers and work with our academic partners to create a multi-year sustainability plan for replacements. Multi-year planning allows for more predictability in our budgeting process. This planning will help prioritize and guide the next few years of work as it ensures our classrooms are well-equipped to support the academic needs of CCV and VTSU. Similarly, our Infrastructure team has worked to inventory our servers and assess our data centers across the VSC to plan for future sustainability.

Our most significant effort in this pillar was an assessment of our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Ellucian Colleague, and connected systems. Led by our CIO, Kellie Campbell, the ERP Assessment included broad representation from CCV and VTSU across all functional areas. The recommendation from the ERP Assessment Steering Committee included an acknowledgment that our current ERP does not serve our needs as a system and our infrastructure is not sustainable for the future. The group recommended moving forward with an ERP project, starting with some pre-work to lay the foundation for success and then issuing a request for proposals for an ERP replacement early in the coming fiscal year.

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TEACHING AND LEARNING

CLASSROOM UPGRADES

The Learning Technologies team collaborated with leadership at CCV and VTSU to improve learning spaces across both institutions. Developing standard classroom designs and reliance on standard technology, including Extron for classroom control systems, provides user consistency and improves support. Newer classrooms have microphones and PTZ cameras that allow remote students to participate in classes. Additionally, the installation of interactive displays (both televisions and monitors) allows instructors to share digital notes, improving the in-person and remote student experience.

ACADEMIC SOFTWARE

Software that supports teaching and learning, including our Learning Management System (Canvas), video storage platform (YuJa), and video conferencing system (Zoom), is undergoing review to look for efficiencies and cost savings. The analysis of tools will help Shared Services make choices that reflect users' needs while balancing fiscal responsibility. Collaborations across service areas within IT Shared Services, CCV Online leadership, and the VTSU Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation help identify ways to support teaching and learning for all institutions.

TLT

The Teaching and Learning with Technology group, a cross-institution collaborative group focused on technology usage throughout the system, was revamped to meet the needs of the current institutions. A collaboration with CCV Academic Deans and VTSU CTLI helped provide new guidance and leadership for this committee. The initial initiative includes four subcommittees: OER, Accessibility, Online Teaching, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

IT OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GOVERNANCE

This year, we prioritized communications and governance. As we came together as IT Shared Services, we established a procedure for communicating with students and employees throughout the Vermont State Colleges. We developed templates for emergency and plan outage notifications so users can rely on timely and predictable communications from IT when internet or software system outages happen. Governance has also been important to our IT organization to help us build relationships, enhance communication, and provide structure in our decision-making. In addition to the revamped TLT group (see the Teaching and Learning section), IT works with the Council of Presidents for budgeting, the leadership teams at CCV and VTSU, and other governance groups. Our Chief Information Officer has also strengthened our relationship with the Board of Trustees.We expect to expand our governance work to include new groups, like students, in the coming year.

DATA AS AN ASSET

Seeing data as an asset and supporting data-driven decision-making is an area of growth for us as a system. Foundational work began last year on data governance, reporting, and data cleanup efforts. An Institutional Research Council was created with CCV, VTSU, and Shared Services membership. We also began working with a vendor partner on key data projects in preparation for a future ERP project, including a reporting project and a data governance project, which will help us establish processes and methods for managing our institutional data. After laying some groundwork this past year, we expect significant progress in this area in the coming year, especially to prepare us for ERP work ahead.

USER EXPERIENCE

DUO UPGRADE

In early 2024, a team embarked on a project to upgrade our Duo from the traditional prompt to the new and improved universal prompt. The project aimed to provide a better user experience with the upgraded user interface, provide an opportunity to inventory systems using our single sign-on system, and cross-train additional IT staff to support our single sign-on system. The deadline set by Duo to perform this upgrade was three months, so the project team worked efficiently to communicate the project and migrate each system to use the new Duo with minimal user impact. The upgrade provided us with a more accessible and modern experience for our users.
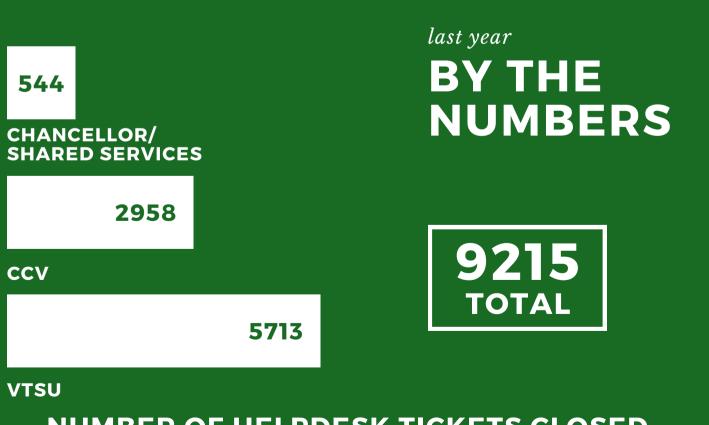
FORMSTACK FORMS

The Vermont State Colleges System, especially Vermont State University, has embraced Formstack as an eForms solution. Many talented individuals are now able to spread their expertise across our campuses and academic centers. This allows multiple departments to streamline their workflows to improve the student experience when requesting a change to their course schedule, working through their Financial Aid and billing, and requesting assistance from departments like Academic Support and Disability Services. The form-building power users will continue improving the student experience by acting on a continuous improvement plan and streamlining staff and faculty approval processes.

WIRELESS UPGRADES

Internet access enables everything we do but typically does not receive attention unless it breaks. The team that deploys and manages internet access to our campuses, academic centers, and sites throughout the state has done significant work in the last year to expand and upgrade Wi-Fi coverage throughout the system. The team's efforts have resulted in faster and more reliable internet and an enhanced user experience. The network team continues to explore ways to improve connectivity across all campuses to ensure the network does not limit academic exploration.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND COMPLIANCE

Cybersecurity is a priority at Vermont State Colleges. This year, the Security team revamped Incident Response policy and implemented new procedures that detail a clear chain of command and dictate the actions taken when our organization is called to respond to security incidents. The Security team also purchased and implemented an Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) system for VSC-owned servers and computers. This software is modern anti-virus software that detects threats to our computers and allows our security team to investigate and respond to those threats. The IT Security group also monitors our compliance with federal regulations related to technology and works closely with our cybersecurity insurer.

last year

BY THE NUMBERS

544

CHANCELLOR/ SHARED SERVICES

2958

CCV

5713

VTSU

9215
TOTAL

NUMBER OF HELPDESK TICKETS CLOSED JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024