



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

THE SCOOP

Office of the Chancellor ITS Department News

January 2010

Chancellor McCormick urges 'open minds, creative spirit' at Students First initiative launch

The Students First initiative reached a new milestone on Dec. 9, when its official launch was celebrated at the Office of the Chancellor. While the weather was not cooperative, ITS staff scrambled to make it possible for those unable to brave the stormy roads to participate via ITV and WebEx. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Chancellor James McCormick welcomed the 60 members of Students First Subject Matter Expert Working Group who attended, along with another 30 who joined remotely.

Noting that the team responsible for shaping this initiative is "making history," McCormick stressed that Students First is of vital importance to the 400,000 students the system serves every year. "They

are counting on us to get this job done," he said. Though the challenges of implementing the six projects that make up the initiative may prove to be challenging and complex, he called on those present to bring "open minds and a creative spirit" to the work ahead. "I am confident that we can find ways to overcome differences and better serve students," he said.

McCormick emphasized that he is not asking colleges and universities in the system "to put aside institutional pride, but to build upon it." He said: "This initiative will help us become a stronger system, which doesn't make individual colleges and universities any less unique or important. We stand to gain because we will create a better system for our students and compete more effectively in an increasingly competitive higher education environment."

Students First co-sponsors Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer and Vice Chancellor Laura King offered greetings and support for those gathered to advance the initiative in support of students.

Following an overview presentation by initiative director John O'Brien, members of the six Subject Matter Expert Working Groups spent the afternoon organizing around individual projects and shaping plans for ensuring input from key stakeholders.

There are six projects that comprise the Students First initiative:

- Single Search
- Single Application
- Single Registration
- Graduation Planner
- Single Bill/Pay
- Shared Services

Comprehensive information on the Students First initiative is available at www.studentsfirst.project.mnscu.edu.

What's Inside

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Itanium Project Update

The recently completed Itanium Project migrated the ISRS application from the current Alpha server environment to a new Itanium Platform.

Huge Benefits:

1. We estimate a cost savings of \$2.6M over three years in the ITS operational budget.
2. We moved to a more current and therefore, a more maintainable platform.
3. We can now position the hardware environment to begin work on re-architecting ISRS for High Availability (HA) and Horizontal Scalability (HS). Our three to five year plan will be to move from the VMS operating system to Unix.

The Alpha manufacturer, HP, had ceased

accepting orders for new Alpha systems as of April 2007 and the OOC technical teams were increasing under pressure to maintain unsupported environments (e.g. older Oracle drivers).

Since the RDB to Oracle conversion in the spring of 2009, the Alpha platform now had more capacity than we needed and with the leases on the Alpha's expiring in November 2009 and February 2010, we had an opportunity to downsize to a less costly and more current Platform.

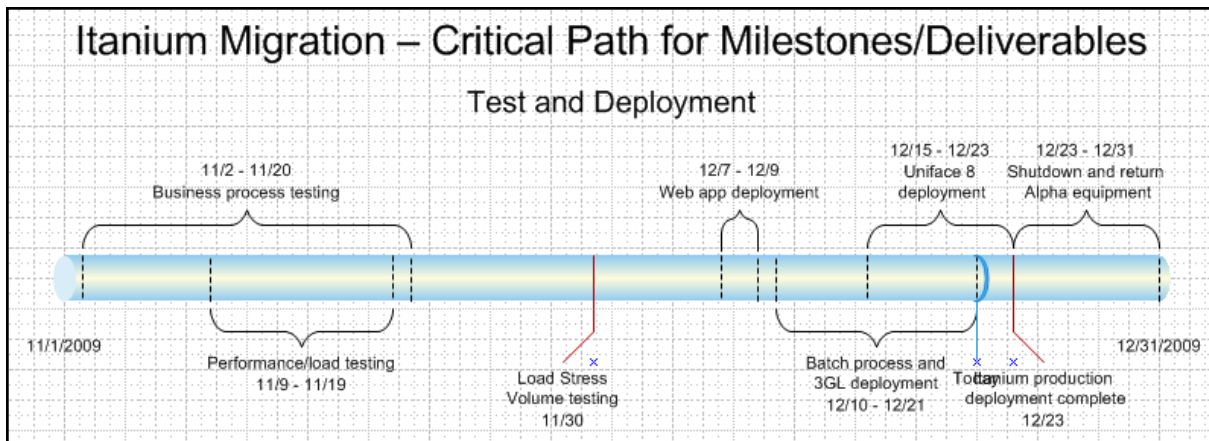
Current Status:

We have completed the Itanium deployment. As you can see in the diagram below, the deployment was split into 3 phases. We ran the Alpha and Itanium

environments side by side, keeping them in sync as we deployed ISRS application changes. This gave us the opportunity to fail back over to the Alpha platform quickly, if problems arose.

We did encounter a couple of problems with the Uniface ISRS Client/Server Application in which staff were experiencing sessions freezing or not responding and it taking a long time for the log in screen to appear but these two issues have recently been resolved.

Thanks to the hard work of the campuses and ITS staff involved in this project, we were able to hold to our aggressive schedule and save the system a huge amount of money. Thanks!!!



MMB's SWIFT Project and MnSCU's SWIFT Interface Project

In October, 2009, the SWIFT Project launched a new website at: www.swift.state.mn.us.

SWIFT (Statewide Integrated Financial Tools) is the new name for the MAPS replacement project. Visitors to the website will find information on the project scope, structure, roles and responsibilities of state agencies and the SWIFT Project, training and a calendar. The site will be updated ongoing as the project

moves toward the July 1, 2011 implementation.

Maximus, the contractor hired by MMB to implement SWIFT, and members of the SWIFT project team have been conducting FIT/GAP meetings with state agency subject matter experts (SMEs), identifying where the PeopleSoft product does not meet user requirements first identified

during FY07 and FY08.

The SWIFT Project team also conducted a survey about how agencies work with the IA Data Warehouse. The team is reviewing the information and will use it to determine the future data warehouse approach under SWIFT.

Beginning in January 2010, decisions will

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Spotlight on... Lisa Carter

Lisa started with the Office of the Chancellor (OOC) in March 1998 on the original student help desk for ISRS!

Her position now is that of a Campus Support Analyst. She is housed in Granite Falls and her role primarily includes campus support and training of ISRS although she is regularly called on for various other projects.

When not at work at the OOC, you can often find Lisa working at the family business, Prairie Palette Landscapes, with her husband, setting up merchandise, potting new plants, and getting ready for the spring planting season.

Lisa is also involved in many community activities, including Yellow Medicine County Santa's Sleigh and Western Fest Royalty Committee. She received the Woman of

the Year award from the Granite Falls Area Chamber of Commerce in 2005. Congrats Lisa!

When asked about interesting life stories, Lisa says "my whole life is interesting and exhausting...we are still finishing the remodel of our home on the Minnesota River, a seemingly never ending project".

She also enjoys watching and supporting her daughter in her various activities of sports, music, and 4H. Along with photography, cross-stitch and ,when time allows, playing with and riding horse.

Lisa's family includes: Husband Bob, Daughter Emma, Baby due April 2010, Dogs: Rosie (greyhound), Botti (collie); Cats: Mabel, Maui, Booger and YoYo; Rabbits: Mauer and Adrien (aka A.P.)



Lisa with her husband Bob

Cool events you have attended: I worked the concession stand at the Metrodome twice for MN Twins games, raising money for a 1 yr old little girl with eye cancer (family friend). Met a lot of interesting people!

Future hopes/goals: Survive winter! We're really looking forward to the arrival of Baby Carter in April! Hope to make it through spring planting and open house with a newborn baby!



Free Security Training—Did You Know?

Who? Any information technology services staff within Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. These courses are provided **free** to ITS staff, faculty and student employees

What? Self-paced online courses covering various information security-related areas

Where? <http://www.its.mnscu.edu/security/training/index.html>

Why? To get an increased awareness of how your actions can improve security and reduce risk, to increase your efficiency and effectiveness, and possibly earn continuing education units (CEUs)

How? Talk to your Supervisor, if taking the class "on the clock", to make sure that they

approve and then [just click!](#)

Classes are currently available in the following areas:

- [Information Security](#)
- [Network](#)
- [Server](#)
- [Security Management](#)
- [Data and Device Encryption](#)
- [Programmer](#)

Classes in the works include Continuity of Operations, Database Administration, Desktop, and Incident Response.

Click here for the [Curriculum Overview](#)

to see all the upcoming courses

Some History:

In 2007 – 2008 the Information Security Office travelled to every system school to identify current levels of IT Security. A common theme across the campuses was a need for additional knowledge and awareness of specific things that could be done to secure their environment.

Not many individual campuses had this type of training available so the decision was made to create a curriculum that could be used by all the system campuses. As a result, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Information Security Office and

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We would love to hear from you! Please send your ideas for future editions to: Valerie.Schmidt@csu.mnscu.edu

SWIFT Project *cont.*

be made by project leadership as to how much programming/customization will be performed by Maximus to resolve the SWIFT functionality gaps.

MnSCU SMEs (both Finance and ITS) plan to meet with Maximus by mid-January to specifically discuss the impact of the SWIFT implementation on the current IT MAPS-MnSCU interface programs and certain business practices (e.g., how inter-agency payments will be processed).

On December 17, representatives from all

areas of Minnesota state government attended a "Taking Flight" kick-off meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to establish the framework and relationship between the SWIFT Project and its stakeholders to ensure a smooth process as progress continues toward implementation. Denise Kirkeby (Financial Reporting/OOC), Connie Edwards (Campus Services/OOC), and Bill O'Brien (ITS PMO/OOC) represented MnSCU at this meeting.

The scope of MnSCU's SWIFT Interface project will be determined by the outcome of

the January meetings with Maximus and the SWIFT Project team leadership.

If the SWIFT Interface project team members have access to details of functionality and customization during design, development and testing phases of the SWIFT Project, the Interface team should be able to accomplish advance planning for the MnSCU development effort during the January through June, 2010.

Watch for future updates on both projects!

Free Security Training *cont.*

[Advance IT Minnesota](#), (formerly the Center for Strategic IT and Security) have worked collaboratively to develop this program.

A security training advisory group convened to lay out the curriculum and courses that would be the most beneficial and applicable. An RFP was created and qualified ITS staff, library science staff, CIO's, and others were asked to create courses.

Happening Now:

This is an ongoing project; more courses are being developed as a need is identi-

fied. There are currently 6-7 courses in development and about 30 additional courses have been identified and are in various stages of progress.

If you have an interest in possibly creating an upcoming course, email [Firasat Khan](#), [John Hoffoss](#) or [Jim Nelson](#) for more information.

More courses are anticipated in upcoming months; possibly a couple each month, with 10-18 new courses becoming available in the next 18 months. Be sure to check the [website](#) frequently.



"We hope to have something for everyone within these different tracks. There are a number of different tracks to correlate with various job duties."

-John Hoffoss



Stay Warm!