SWOT - Strengths

ITS SWOT Strengths Group Members:
Michael Alguire, Terry Ruger, Irene Scott, and Tony Tabone

Knowledgeable and Dedicated Staff

Information Technology Services brings a wealth of knowledge as the department has smart, intelligent and accomplished individuals who are customer-service focused and have broad experiences across a number of areas and disciplines with a good mix of both higher education and industry professionals.[1 2] The department's personnel are very dedicated to the college and its mission.[2] As a whole they have a strong cooperative spirit, are industrious and introspective, embrace a collaborative culture, and are constantly striving to improve. [3]

Partnerships and Collaboration

Information Technology Services has strong partnerships with key functional offices and others within Information Technology Services department to facilitate a collaborative approach for the management of our major enterprise systems.[3] Information Technology Services is acknowledged as having strong collaboration and communication with the campus community.[4] Well established, highly effective collaborations and problem solving with many campus departments for several systems and services.[4] Instructional Support Services and Digital Media Services were identified by faculty and staff as two strong areas of collaboration.[2]

Systems and Programs

Information Technology Services has a Mature Systems and ERP Infrastructure – Overall our key ERP systems are mature proven solutions, providing stable service to the campus.[3] Provost's Council shared "Quick turnaround on updates for Homer/Banner".[4] The Technology Renewal Program - The department has instituted an Information Technology refresh program that is robust and ensures equipment and tools are modern and up-to-date. Obsolescence in equipment is not an issue at the college.[1] Sakai was acknowledged several times by both faculty and students as a helpful system they rely on.[5]

Support Services

Many groups acknowledge the Information Technology Services Helpdesk as providing a strong central point of contact for the campus community and the core functions provide excellent first-tier services and escalation as needed. Information Technology Services provides great customer service in several areas, especially at the Helpdesk.[2] Customer service was the most common Information Technology Services strength identified by our Information Technology Services student employees.[6] Other helpful services Information Technology Services was acknowledge several times by faculty and staff were Digital Media Services, Classroom Technology Services, and Technology Learning Center Workshops while the students identified Classroom Technology Services and FixIT Shop as helpful IT services.[6]

SWOT - Weaknesses

ITS SWOT Weaknesses Group Members:
Matt Gorney, Steve Lane, Irene Scott, Kyle Szuta, and Tony Tabone

Poor Wi-Fi [currently being addressed, this was the top issue] [1 2 3 5 6 7 10 12 13]
Lack of Information Technology Strategy [currently being addressed][1 2 4 5 10 13]

Lack of Communication

We are weak in collaboration, customer service, transparency, and the need for an open an honest dialogue.[1 2 5 6 7 10] We have silos of information and we do not fully share with our internal and external community. [1 2 3 5 6 12] Many systems are undocumented and users are unaware of our services and policies.[2 5 6 7 10 12 13] Additionally, we do not focus on the specific training needs of faculty.[2 4 5 7 10 12 13] We do not adequately take in feedback to inform our growth and transformation.[1 5 7]

Lack of Information Technology Services Governance

We lack visibility in setting priorities and resource allocations and final decisions. [2 7 12 13] Lack of alignment to college institutional priorities where Ithaca College Administration needs to play a larger role in the Information Technology Services Governance process, including President's Council.[1 5 7 13] We need a structure upon which we can vet and implement academic computing initiatives alongside other work.[1 2 7 12] We need to update and align our governance, risk, compliance, and cybersecurity policies, FERPA, HIPPA, PCI and Data Classification policies and Disaster Recovery plans.[2 10]
We have unnecessary policies that create barriers for users and create false perceptions regarding their purpose.[2 7] We delay growth and transformation by lack of adequate policy.[2 5]

Staffing Issues

Staff are spread thin (understaffed) and spread out among campus with many positions unfilled.[2 5 12 13] There is no backup for staff with specific technical expertise.[2 12] Staff spend lots of time on manual processes, operational tasks, and meetings, which prohibit staff from getting the time to grow and transform.[2 12] Low morale, complacency and a culture of mediocrity are identified.[2 6 13] Also mentioned, was a lack of leadership in terms of management, where a disconnect between leadership and staff exists.[1 5 13] The department as a whole lacks an overall identity - we don't work together well as one team.[1 2 5] We don't have skillset inventory and we don't know what we need so we can't fill the gap when hiring.[1] We lack the knowledge to know what our capacity planning levels are.[2 10]

Need for more Professional Development

There is a lack of a personal plan for each employee, with unequal distribution of professional development throughout Information Technology Services.[2 13] There is a lack of a career path

for upward mobility, with no grooming or succession planning for leadership positions, with related feedback of a lack of mentoring.[2 10]

Productivity, Standards and Practices Need Improvement

We have an organizational inability to deploy technologies and lack the ability to respond in a nimble manner to changing priorities.[1 2 4 7] We need to be better at "moving things through the queue". [1] The department as a whole is behind the times in terms of technology, and modern capabilities of an Information Technology Shop.[1 7 12] Ownership and accountability - the department as a whole is challenged.[1] We do not do a good job developing standard processes, architectures and methodologies for our work.[2 3] We lack mainstream industry standard operational practices, design architectures, development, testing and documentation methodologies.[3 12 13] We lack standard security practices and have little user experience testing.[3 12]

Projects/Project Management Issues

As a department, we are not especially good at estimating the amount of time or resources it will take to complete a project.[3] We don't track human resources costs when considering projects and workload just builds up. We don't include necessary monetary costs when implementing projects - i.e. money for training.[10] There is occasional tension between project team members and the Information Technology Services Project Management Office regarding practices and approaches to projects and resources.[1 3] There is confusion over how to place a project or goal within the Information Technology Services organization - it appears splintered. We are weak in our level of academic technology initiatives.[7 12]

Specific Areas of Technological Weakness

Main weaknesses mentioned in the feedback were the absence of a unifying Identity Management and Single-sign on solution.[1 12 13] We lack a robust virtual infrastructure.[1 7 10 13] Our website was mentioned as weak in several areas.[5 10 12] Our users feel our systems are outdated and frustrating to use.[5 7 12] Some systems lack flexibility and capacity, and there is little integration between them.[1 3 7] We have too many systems and too many custom solutions across campus.[7 13] Also, we have a lack of Business Intelligence, which hinders the use of data across our systems.[1 3] We lack a true Research & Development environment for testing.[1] Our Technology ordering, receiving and renewal process is not efficient and is outdated.[7 12] Many call for more labs in terms of equipment and/or computers.[5 6 7]

SWOT – Opportunities

ITS SWOT Opportunities Group Members:
Michael Alguire, Vanessa Brown, Marilyn Dispensa, Jennifer Landon, Melissa Lane, Steve Lane, Wendy Penfold, (with additional input from Steve Adams)

Technology

The availability and possibility of new technologies or technologies that are commonly used but the College is not yet using appears to be the dominant opportunity mentioned by all input sources. Virtualization, collaboration tools, cloud services, BI/Analytical tools, classroom technologies are all mentioned repeatedly as something the College should use to propel its way forward. Additionally we should take advantage of features of tools and applications that we own but are not using.[7] For example, Sakai could be used more fully and become more integrated into the student's experience. Students expect this kind of integration and it more closely resembles other tools they use in other aspects of their lives.[8] The shifting demographics of College faculty and staff (25% approaching retirement) also lend an opportunity.[7 9] Identifying leaders in digital fluency across the campus and an influx of new faculty and staff with different perspectives and experience could be a big resource for using new kinds of technology.[7 10] Information Technology Services (ITS) should partner with them to introduce new technologies into the classroom and other areas of the College. The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are mature and ITS has the opportunity to forge a roadmap for moving forward that allows for more unified and efficient processing.[3] Vendors are offering diverse choices for solutions in terms of technology including embedded analytics and flexible cloud solutions.

New Leadership in ITS

New leadership in ITS and all the opportunities that affords is another common theme. Those opportunities include a strategic plan, an effective governance process, better partnerships with the College overall, better communication and promotion of ITS interests and services, more transparency and inclusiveness, promoting staff development for all staff members and embracing change in general (example: a more formalized R&D effort within the department).[1 2] The large number of staff vacancies within ITS also gives opportunity to more closely align the ITS organization structure with future directions.[9]

Partnerships and Collaboration

Another predominant theme is the opportunity for partnerships and collaboration within the College and with outside organizations or other Colleges and Universities. There are opportunities with all the constituencies at the College - faculty, staff, and students. ITS could partner and collaborate with all to deliver better overall service quality.[4 9] Knowledge silos between academic/administrative or between departments that exist could be broken down to foster better communication and crossover solution development.[4 9] It would also offer a means for ITS to be better informed about directions on campus and have a "seat at the table" early in discussions.[9] Partnerships with other organizations and Colleges and Universities allows for more influx of ideas and solutions to common issues.[1 10] An example of something ITS could do is take advantage of grant writing expertise on campus and obtain grants available for IT education focused initiatives.[10]

Availability of New Data Sources

A availability of new data sources that could be used to improve decision-making in all areas of the College's purview including teaching and learning, student outcomes, retention, enrollment, and administrative decision-making could help the College to improve the overall experience and education of students as well as reduce costs that would help in maintaining lower tuition increases. Students expect the College to use personal educational data to aid in their academic progress, an attitude that is different from previous generations . The prevalence of cloud based solutions that are being implemented or discussed by departments across campus offer specialized data that is not collected by ERP systems. There will be increased pressure to use advanced analytics to gain insight into data sources that are not traditional. Social media and other unstructured data sources may provide needed information to give the College a competitive advantage.[9]

Student Pool of Talent

Lastly, our student pool of talent may offer an opportunity that helps ITS alleviate resource demands and also works to support the College's strategic goal of a more integrated learning experience for students. Internships and student projects are examples of ways to utilize students as a resource for creative ideas and give students "real-life" work experience. This ties directly to service learning promoted as part of IC2020 on the academic side.[9]

Additional Sources not cited above:
ITS Student Workers SWOT Input [6]
User Support SWOT [12]
Summary of SWOT feedback from CIO Report of the ITS Department conducted in Spring 2014 [13]

SWOT - Threats

ITS SWOT Threats Group Members:
Chris Davie, Brian Edwards, Jeff Newhart, and Mark Yowan

Resources

Regarding resources, the most relevant threat to ITS and the institution itself is a **decrease in enrollment**[1] [11] which in turn decreases available budget while **expectations for high level of service remain the same**.[1 6 11] Lack of budget resources directly impacts our ability to **invest in the necessary advancements to our infrastructure**.[10] It was noted that the **aging of ITS staff**[1 11] is a realistic threat if we do not put a viable plan for succession in place. It was also identified that with the state of the economy, Ithaca College may be unable to **retain current staff**[3 10] or attract IT candidates who are at the top of their game due to our **inability to compete with market salaries**.[3 10] Another perceived resource threat is the **physical space constraints**[1 11] of ITS with the impact impeding our ability to effectively collaborate and manage crises.

Changing Technology

Changing technology is a threat that should be ever present in the field of ITS. It was highly remarked that **failure to support R&D**[1 11] efforts that allow us to **adapt and leverage emerging technologies**[2 8 12] will adversely affect our level of service to the campus. Noted examples of **missed opportunities in new technologies**[2 8 12] were cloud based services, virtualization, support for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Mobile Device Management (MDM) infrastructure, and collaboration tools. Further points were raised about the increasing need/desire from faculty and students to **leverage technology to enhance the teaching/learning experience**.[6 7 8] Finally, **increased reliance on cloud services**[10] introduces a number of threats concerning loss of control over availability, cost increases and data security.

Campus Perceptions

Finally, regarding campus perceptions, a prevalent **negative perception**[2] threatens our ability to outwardly collaborate and deliver a consistent level of service throughout the campus. Effects of this persistent poor perception **negatively impact the ITS staff's morale**.[1] Campus department's lack of confidence has caused some to be **unwilling to partner with ITS** and others to **implement technology solutions in isolation.**[1 11] A different take on campus perception is the **culture of customization**[3] - the expectation that IT will customize internal and 3rd party products to meet IC policies and procedures. This consumes our resources in the continuous need for support and maintenance as vendor supplied software/hardware continually upgrade.

References:

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2. ITS Staff 2014 TechQual+ Survey
3. EAS Overview, Directions and SWOT – July 2014
4. Provost Council Meeting SWOT Feedback 11-12-2014
5. Campus 2014 TechQual+ Survey
6. SWOT from ITS Student Workers 10/30 – 11/6/2014
7. 2013 Faculty Survey
8. ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology, 2014
9. ITS SWOT Opportunities Group Input
10. ITS Strategic Planning Team Input
11. ITS SWOT Threat Group Input
12. ITS User Support SWOT (Short Version)
13. Summary of SWOT feedback from CIO Report of the ITS Department