ALMANAC
2017

Reflections of 2016
The Office of Information Technology

Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed

The University of Texas at San Antonio
Office of Information Technology
Reflections of 2016
The Office of Information Technology

Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed
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Collaborate – Innovate – Succeed:

In 2016, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) embarked on a mission to introduce a new brand reflecting OIT’s transition from a technology-focused entity to a customer-oriented department. With top-tier customer service and success at the forefront of our minds, we decided on a distinct tagline of powerful action words to embody the essence of our intent in interacting with the UTSA community: Collaborate – Innovate – Succeed.

Throughout the year, OIT staff, comprising approximately 150 thriving part-time and full-time professionals, collaborated with various stakeholders across different departments at the University to support research endeavors and academic success. Our staff demonstrates its commitment to our new brand by fully ensuring that our customers who are mainly UTSA students, faculty and staff take precedence in all of our relations and are treated with the utmost integrity and excellence.

OIT’s new brand, therefore, further exemplifies our steadfastness in supporting UTSA in its quest for Tier One designation. It also reflects our stance as harbingers for change and demonstrates our firm dedication to supporting the UTSA community by offering unparalleled customer and technology services. Within OIT, innovate means opening our minds to new ideas and ways of thinking. It is this open-minded approach which has driven us to not just meet, but surpass customer expectations in 2016.

Our yearly almanac offers a glimpse into the ingenuity and dedication of our staff during the past year and highlights our critical contributions to ensuring student achievement and helping to solidify UTSA’s reputation as a Tier One institution not just locally but across the United States. OIT will remain committed to delivering top-tier customer and technology services to ensure that we always exemplify outstanding customer service in an effort to help our students succeed.

Bryan Wilson
Vision

To be a world-class organization and a trusted partner in developing solutions that advance educational excellence and research at UTSA.
The Office of Information Technology is committed to student, faculty and staff success and advances in research, through collaboration and innovation. Our staff is dedicated to providing outstanding service to the UTSA community.
Students

OIT is committed to supporting student success by providing key technology services that strengthen and enhance students’ educational and campus experiences.

Technology Achievements

- Redesigned UTSA Mobile App
- Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative UTSA Campus
- StudentConnect Help Desk
- OneDrive for Business
- Skype for Business
- Microsoft Office Pro Plus
- Upgraded Printspot
- DegreeWorks
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS)
- UTSA Online
Faculty

OIT HAS MADE IT A PRIORITY TO UNDERTAKE PROJECTS THAT PROVIDE UNIVERSITY FACULTY MEMBERS WITH SERVICES THAT ADVANCE THEIR DAY-TO-DAY WORK IN ADDITION TO SUPPORTING UTSA’S MISSION OF TEACHING, LEARNING, AND RESEARCH.

TECHNOLOGY ACHIEVEMENTS

- IMPROVED CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY
- TEACHING ONLINE/HYBRID COURSE ACADEMY
- FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- FACULTY SESSIONS
- INCREASED TECHNOLOGY TRAINING
- ONEDRIVE FOR BUSINESS
- SKYPE FOR BUSINESS
- SHAREPOINT ONLINE
- INNOVATIONS IN ONLINE LEARNING (IOL) CONFERENCE
- EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FILM FESTIVAL (E2F2)
- EXPANDED USE OF OITCONNECT PORTAL
- LECTURE CAPTURE RESOURCES
- LEARNING STUDIO
- OITCONNECT CHAT SUPPORT
OIT IS COMMITTED TO ASSISTING UTSA STAFF IN UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY TO THEIR STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE, WHETHER THEIR TASKS ARE ADMINISTRATIVE, MANAGERIAL, OR INVOLVE THE SUPPORT OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH MISSIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY.

TECHNOLOGY ACHIEVEMENTS

- OITCONNECT CHAT SUPPORT
- OITCONNECT SELF-SERVICE PORTAL
- TECHNOLOGY TRAINING
- SHAREPOINT ONLINE
- ONEDRIVE FOR BUSINESS
- SKYPE FOR BUSINESS
- TELEPHONE REQUEST PROCESS
- OFFICE 365
- SKILLSOFT
- QUALTRICS
Infrastructure

OIT HAS TAKEN A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO ENHANCING AND UPGRADING OUR TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE WITH THE GOAL OF SUPPORTING THE SYSTEMS AND APPLICATIONS OF A TIER-ONE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY.

TECHNOLOGY ACHIEVEMENTS

• OFFICE 365
• SHAREPOINT ONLINE
• ONEDRIVE FOR BUSINESS
• HYPER-V VIRTUALIZATION
• INSIGHT ASSET MANAGEMENT
• NORTH PASEO BUILDING (NPB) AS FIRST FULLY VOICE OVER IP (VOIP) BUILDING
• SECONDARY INTERNET
• VIZLAB RENOVATION
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**myUTSA ID+ is Here for UTShare PeopleSoft!**

**January 10, 2016**

UTSA activated myUTSA ID+ for access to UTShare PeopleSoft on January 10. This affects all faculty and staff when logging into the UTShare PeopleSoft service from both on and off campus.

The UTSA ID+ feature adds a second layer of security when accessing financial and sensitive data on UTShare PeopleSoft by verifying your identity using a second factor (like your phone or a mobile device app). This prevents anyone but you from logging in – even if they know your passphrase! VPN services already require myUTSA ID+.

**OIT Pilot Program: Quick Charge Phone Stations**

**January 26, 2016**

UTSA’s Office of Information Technology is piloting a new phone charging station for students. The charging station features six individual lockers that allow for a secure, fast, and safe charge for compatible phones. Each locker is equipped with charging cables and charges most smartphones and tablets on the current market. Access to each locker is granted by using your student myUTSA ID card and is free for students to use.
January 28, 2016

The Downtown Library, in collaboration with the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Student Computing Services (SCS), kicked off the spring 2016 semester by adding more than 70 computer workstations and a new desk for on-site technical support.

Desktops and laptops were moved from the former Frio Street Computer Lab, bringing the total number of student workstations in the Downtown Library to 123. The additional computers are located in the Quiet Computing Area, as well as in a newly created Computing Zone.

A Student Computing Services support desk—located in the front of the library near the PrintSpot printers—provides technical assistance to the Downtown Campus community. Staff stationed at the desk offer support for PrintSpot printing, Passphrase resets, Air Rowdy Wi-Fi connection issues, and software assistance.

Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative Meeting

February 1, 2016

Interim Vice Provost for Information Technology and CIO Bryan Wilson, Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Interim Executive Director of Enterprise Systems and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza, attended the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC) meeting at the UTSA main campus on February 1.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs John Frederick, along with EAB training staff, presented on the SSC tool and how it will help UTSA and UT System universities improve student success rates. The SSC tool is a predictive algorithm method used by more than 100 institutions across the country to track student performance and determine their success in the degree field.

The UTSA Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is assisting with advisor training and marketing support for this project.
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation hosted a Kotter International Change Management training session at UTSA on Tuesday, March 15 in the Travis Room. OIT team members, Telecommunications Manager Mary-Margaret Echevarria and Communications Specialist Nicole Duff, along with several UTSA faculty and staff, participated in the informative all-day session in which they learned about the “Kotter 8-Step Process for Leading Change”, developed by best-selling author and Harvard professor, Dr. John Kotter. This highly interactive session also featured discussions mainly centered on the implementation of the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC).

Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Executive Director of Advising Services Barbara Smith and Communications Specialist Delia Swiger, Ed.D., all core members of the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) Planning Committee, recorded feedback received from attendees. Members of the Achieving the Dream (ATD) staff, Associate Director of Data and Technology for Student Success, Dr. Mei-Yen Ireland, and Data Coach Leon Hill served as the session's facilitators. UTSA is one of fourteen iPASS grantee institutions that ATD has agreed to provide technical support to aid student success.
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The second annual Educational Experience Film Festival (E2F2) award ceremony, sponsored by the Office of Educational Technology (OET), OIT Digital Learning Office, and the OIT Video Production Group, was held April 14 in the Buena Vista Theater at the Downtown Campus.

The goal of the E2F2 was to showcase the many innovative and artistic uses for video and to raise awareness of the usefulness of digital media as a teaching tool at the University.

Numerous student projects, documentaries, and videos designed to be used as teaching tools were submitted.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) held the 2nd annual OIT Spring Tech Conference on April 20. The OIT Spring Tech Conference succeeded at promoting and expanding understanding of the technology resources available to the UTSA community through information sessions, hands-on demonstrations, a dynamic keynote presentation, and a vendor fair.

More than 670 students, faculty, and staff signed up to attend sessions given by knowledgeable OIT staff and top technology providers. Participants were able to ask questions about various products and see demos of the newest technology available at UTSA from our technology leaders.

Gartner Executive Partner Dr. Rick Nordtvedt, Ph.D. delivered the keynote presentation titled “Digital Examples from the 2016 CIO Agenda: You, too, can predict the future.”
OIT Hosts Advanced Qualtrics Training for UTSA Faculty and Staff

April 21, 2016

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted an advanced Qualtrics Training session for UTSA faculty and staff on Thursday, April 21 in the Denman Room. The two-hour long session, led by Qualtrics expert Quayla Skevington, focused primarily on the online survey tool.

Attendees learned about creating, distributing and reporting surveys during the interactive session. Complimentary lunch was also provided thanks to the generosity of the Innovations in Online Learning (IOL) Conference.

PrintSpot Printer and Lab Without Walls at Laurel Village Student Activities Center

May 20, 2016

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) Student Computing Services (SCS), in partnership with the Student Housing Office, is now piloting a Student PrintSpot printer in the Laurel Village Student Activities Center. This remote printer location allows students staying in the dorms to access printing services close to where they live. In addition to the PrintSpot printer, OIT has also placed a Lab Without Walls Kiosk next to the printer for student use. This kiosk has the same image and program options as computers in the SCS Labs. Students can log onto the computer with their myUTSA ID and edit prints, check email, print important documents, and much more!
Office of Online Learning Hosts 12th Annual Innovations in Online Learning (IOL) Conference

May 25 - 27, 2016

The UTSA Office of Online Learning kicked off its 12th annual Innovations in Online Learning (IOL) conference on Wednesday, May 25, at the Hotel Contessa in downtown San Antonio.

The IOL conference unites higher education professionals who are involved in online learning for a series of discussions, workshops, ignite and peer review sessions focused on ideas that would drive innovation for the future of online learning. Chief Academic Officer at iDesignEDU Whitney Kilgore served as the opening keynote speaker and presented on the topic “LX Design: From IDEAS to ACTION.” Kilgore discussed the importance of considering the learner experience when designing online courses to effectively meet each student’s needs.

The conference also explored a myriad of topics, including using universal design and 3D printing to ensure accessibility, as well as using technology to create a culturally-responsive learning environment.

UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab) Renovations

June 3, 2016

The UTSA Advanced Visualization Laboratory (VizLab), managed by the Office of Information Technology Research Computing Support Group (RCSG), allows researchers from all disciplines of art, science and engineering to conduct simulation and visualization research to better understand complex phenomena and translate data into images on large-scale and high resolution visualization walls or other display devices.

The RCSG recently completed an upgrade of the monitors in an effort to improve visualization. The team was able to locate and acquire new monitors with a mere 5mm bezel. The smaller bezel sizes have greatly enhanced the visualization experience. RCSG Support Engineers Jeremy Mann and Thomas Freeman explained that in addition to physically mounting the monitors, a lot of staff time and effort went into aligning them properly, both physically and within the Linux application that drives the VizWall monitors.
OIT Hosts North SA Chamber of Commerce CIO Breakfast

June 23, 2016

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce monthly CIO Breakfast on June 23. The event began in the John Peace Library (JPL) Assembly Room and ended with a tour showcasing several OIT managed areas on campus. Several OIT staff members participated in this event, offering insight on technology at UTSA.

Interim Executive Director of Enterprise Systems and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza opened the event and welcomed attendees. Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia discussed UTSA and OIT at a glance and provided a tour overview.

Manager of Communication Infrastructure Services Keith Trevino and Manager of Systems Infrastructure Services Ryan Key served as tour guides for the first stop of the tour, the Library Data Center. Following this, Senior IT Infrastructure Project Manager Gilbert Cassiano led the group on a Research Data Center tour.

Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed: The Office of Information Technology Rebrands

June 24, 2016

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is officially rebranding its logo and has introduced a new mission statement and vision. The rebranding is part of OIT’s effort to showcase its transition from a technology-centered to a people-centered department.

OIT’s Mission:

“The Office of Information Technology is committed to student, faculty, and staff success and advances in research, through collaboration and innovation.”

“Our staff is dedicated to providing outstanding service to the UTSA community.”

OIT’s Vision:

“To be a world class organization and a trusted partner in developing solutions that advance educational excellence and research at UTSA.”
QUARTER THREE

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Custom-Made UTSA Mobile App Feature Helps Prepare New Students and Families for Orientation

July 22, 2016

Incoming students now have an even more unique experience before their initial day at UTSA, thanks to the orientation module in the UTSA Mobile App. Recently developed by the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Application Development and Support (ADS) team, in conjunction with their vendor DubLabs, this feature allows new ‘Roadrunners and their family access to a wide array of orientation-related information prior to actually attending orientation.

This module is designed not only to help familiarize new students with UTSA orientation events, but more importantly, to ease their transition into college.

With the new module, users can view complete orientation schedules including locations and a brief description of events planned for both the main and downtown campuses.

The Office of Information Technology’s Student Computing Services (SCS) Launches its StudentConnect Service

July 28, 2016

By August 1, all registered UTSA students can receive FREE technical assistance on their personal devices thanks to a new service provided by the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Student Computing Services (SCS). This new service called StudentConnect has been introduced as part of OIT’s continued commitment to aiding student success. Along with this change, SCS will be rebranding its other student-centered initiatives under the StudentConnect mantra as well.

These initiatives include student PrintSpot and MobilePrint services, public computer labs located in the John Peace and downtown libraries and the Business Building (BB 2.01.20) along with staff to assist with software and technical support. In addition, SCS recently installed three secure phone-charging stations on the main and downtown campuses (on the 2nd floor of the BB and 1st floor of the JPL building on the main campus, and on the 1st floor of the Frio Street building next to Starbucks on the downtown campus) and is working on installing PrintSpot printers and kiosks in Student Housing.
OIT Hosts THECB Site Visit to Discuss Innovation, Student Success and the iPASS Initiative at UTSA

August 4, 2016

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted a UTSA site-visit from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) on August 4. Director of Innovation Tracey Armstrong, Ph.D., visited UTSA to discuss the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant project currently underway at the university.

The iPASS project at UTSA was identified by Dr. Armstrong as an innovative higher education program which aligns with several of the goals of the THECB 60x30 TX Higher Education Strategic Plan.

Students, faculty, and staff from offices throughout UTSA came together for an insightful discussion on iPASS with Dr. Armstrong. The conversation included how UTSA became involved in iPASS and the various initiatives on campus that support student success (such as PIVOT for Academic Success).

iPASS is based on the need to transform advising, student support services and systems to increase student success and degree completion.

The iPASS project focuses on the integration of several systems to form a complete advising platform. UTSA is currently utilizing Ellucian DegreeWorks and launched the Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus) in the fall of 2016.

OIT Hosts UT INFOSEC Summer Conference at UTSA

August 10 - 11, 2016

UTSA’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted the University of Texas Information Security (UT InfoSec) Summer 2016 Conference at UTSA. Over seventy security, internal audit, risk management, and IT professionals attended the conference in the Denman Ballroom on August 10-11. The conference was sponsored by OPTIV Security, Palo Alto Networks, and Tanium.

UT InfoSec is a semi-annual meeting of information security officers and professionals from all UT institutions. The conference has existed for 14 years and gives participants an opportunity to share best practices and receive updates from the UT System. During the conference solution providers we are also given the chance to share research on emerging threats along with new innovations to counter them.

The UT InfoSec agenda included presentations on a wide-range of topics. Attendees were able to discuss current trends, present new products, and receive practical advice for their organizations from industry leaders and other security professionals.
The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT), in collaboration with the UTSA Tomas Rivera Center (TRC) for Student Success, named Martha De Los Reyes the recipient of its 2016 Laptop Award. De Los Reyes, a ’16 alumna, was honored on September 7 at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)/Access College and Excel (ACE) Scholar Program Award Ceremony, which is held annually at the UTSA Downtown Campus.

OIT and TRC recognize outstanding graduates of the ACE Scholar Program, who have obtained a GPA of at least 2.50, and exemplified strong community and campus involvement while at UTSA. The program is specifically designed to assist freshmen from certain high schools with smoothly transitioning into a four-year university in order to earn their bachelor’s degree.

In 2003, UTSA formed a partnership with HACU, allowing the university to receive funding from a collaboration that HACU once had with the former technology hardware company, Gateway. This partnership enables OIT to provide laptop awards for selected ACE Scholar Program graduates annually to help expand technology access.

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) was formed by a committee of faculty researchers with support from OIT to provide necessary support for UTSA researchers who are dependent on high performance computing.

The RCSG, led by Director of Research Computing Support and Innovative Solutions Brent League, supports UTSA’s research community by facilitating growth, enabling productivity and innovation, maintaining and supporting the Research Data Center, offering High Performance Computing solutions, and managing the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab).
The Learning Technologies team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) has created a new learning space called the Learning Studio to help acquaint the UTSA community with new technologies and resources that are readily available to enhance their academic experience at UTSA.

The Learning Technologies team plans to work in conjunction with other OIT areas, such as Support Services and the Office of Online Learning, in hopes that this will help the UTSA community maximize its use of OIT-offered products and services software.
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The next generation of innovative classrooms, which will feature unique technology and an eclectic mix of modern furnishings, will soon be rolling out at UTSA. As part of its ongoing effort to familiarize UTSA faculty and staff with the make-up and layout of these Active Learning Classrooms (ALCs), the Learning Technologies team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) is facilitating two Learning Playgrounds over the course of the next few weeks.

The Learning Technologies team, in conjunction with the Academy for Distinguished Teacher Scholars (ADTS), is spearheading the implementation of ALCs which are set to be launched in spring 2017. Through the strategic layout of their collaborative furniture, as well as their leveraging of technology to enhance learning, ALCs will encourage increased engagement, teamwork and ultimately success amongst UTSA students.

All UTSA Faculty and Staff are invited to visit the Learning Playground showcase in the Main Building (M.B 0.224) from October 11th – October 20th and October 25th – November 4th.

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Video Production Group (VPG) collaborated with UTSA’s Associate Professor Kinitra D. Brooks, Ph.D. in the Department of English to offer multimedia training and insight on the filmmaking process for the course “Black Women, Beyoncé & Popular Culture” (ENG 3613/AAS 4013/WS 4953). The assistance provided by VPG will support students as they complete a three-minute avant-garde film project consisting of four components: script, storyboard, video, and analysis.

The course, taught by Dr. Brooks, uses pop star Beyoncé Knowles’ 2016 audiovisual project, Lemonade, to study “sociocultural issues that are most prominent in black womanhood through black feminist theory, literature, music, and film,” according to the course description. This course demonstrates innovation and has made headlines worldwide on the internet in several news media groups including International Business Times, ABC News, Cosmopolitan, and higher education publications, increasing the university’s visibility.
OIT Student Innovation Coalition Provides Forum for Student’s Feedback

October 6, 2016

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) held its fall OIT Student Innovation Coalition meeting on October 6 in the Travis room (UC 2.202) from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Approximately 80 students were treated to lunch and given presentations from Academic Advising and OIT staff representing various areas in technology that impact students at UTSA.

Students provided great feedback throughout the event and asked pertinent follow-up questions to presenters. The event concluded with open discussion in which students brought up issues and feedback to improve student technology services and managers provided insight.

The Student Innovation Coalition is a great opportunity for students to learn about services available to them through OIT and for OIT leadership to learn about student perceptions. OIT holds this event in the fall and spring each year to provide outreach to students.

UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Hosts the Fall Faculty Showcase Presentations for Hybrid/Online Courses

October 28, 2016

On October 28th, the UTSA Office of Online Learning team hosted the 2016 Fall Faculty Showcase Presentations. The purpose of the event was two-fold: 1) to recognize some of UTSA’s faculty innovators teaching hybrid/online courses who are promoting our University mission towards becoming a Tier 1 institution, and 2) to share ideas and best teaching practices with other faculty - on tool integration, and course management strategies that enhance student learning.

During the event, approximately 20 UTSA instructors’ hybrid or online courses were showcased with their best teaching practices and the strategies they use to help enhance student learning. Each instructor’s course was displayed on a computer station and included an information card of the courses unique features. The instructors were available at each station to address any questions and share ideas with other faculty to help incorporate the strategies presented into future courses.

The faculty showcase was beneficial to all instructors who are looking to design or enhance their hybrid/online courses. All UTSA faculty were encouraged to attend, learn, discuss, and integrate the ideas into their courses.
During fall of 2016, four UTSA undergrad students from the College of Engineering were awarded the High-Performance Computing (HPC) Scholarship. The four students currently study Biomedical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering. The scholarship became effective for the students last month and provides them with the opportunity to become familiar with the HPC capabilities at UTSA and move their research to HPC information systems. The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) is collaborating with the College of Engineering to provide the students with the proper training for their scholarship.

The students obtained an account on Shamu, the largest HPC at the university, and will use the semester to get acquainted with Linux operating systems and learn how to use HPC systems for research. OIT’s RCSG has been training the students every week in the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab), giving students Linux training, overviewing the visualization capabilities of the Vizlab, and showing the students the basics of programming.

The University of Texas at San Antonio’s (UTSA) research needs have expanded greatly over the recent years. This has been due in part to the university’s efforts to achieve Tier One status. To support this, the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) is collaborating with faculty across the university to discover where enhancements in technology could support their research as well as find innovative ways to use what is already in place. Additionally, the RCSG has worked in partnership with the OIT Video Production Group (VPG) to produce a video that highlights what the RCSG is designed to do and how this support can benefit the entire university.

The RCSG provides support for faculty, student researchers, and data analysts through various means including storage, Research Data Centers, and Shamu (the high compute cluster). As research and data analytics expand, high performance computing resources are needed to support researchers at UTSA.

The RCSG recently collaborated with Interim Vice Provost for IT and CIO Bryan Wilson and multiple interdisciplinary faculty across campus to apply for a National Science Foundation Grant to bring a 10G connectivity, research only network, to several buildings on campus. Increased collaboration and support of academic partners at UTSA applying for grants, awards, and other opportunities is one of the objectives of OIT in support of UTSA Blueprint.
OIT’s Learning Technologies Team Hosts 2016 CCUMC Conference Campus Tour at the UTSA Main Campus

November 2 – 6, 2016

The Learning Technologies team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted this year’s Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC) national conference which convened in San Antonio for the first time. The conference ran from November 2-6 and was held at the Holiday Inn Riverwalk. As part of the agenda for the conference’s penultimate day, the team led more than 200 attendees on a tour of the UTSA Main Campus.

The tour commenced with a Welcome Address from Interim Executive Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza. Afterwards, attendees from technology companies and more than 50 institutions of higher education spanning across The United States, Bermuda, Canada, Egypt and England, including Harvard Business School, Yale and Stanford Universities, were given a first-hand look at some of the technology and furniture utilized to facilitate learning at UTSA.

The CCUMC conference unites various institutions of higher education and technology companies for a series of keynote presentations, interest groups and concurrent sessions focused on leveraging technology in higher education. In addition, it features a vendor showcase of current and emerging audio visual technology from leading companies. This year a total of 34 states were represented at the conference.
New UTSA Research Conflict of Interest (COI) Website Now Live

November 22, 2016

UTSA faculty needing to complete their annual Conflict of Interest (COI) can now do so via a new website. During summer of 2016, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s Application Development and Support (ADS) team collaborated with the UTSA Office of Research Integrity (ORI) to develop a user-friendly website that will offer faculty a sleek user interface, with a modern design, which will replace the previously used system.

The ADS team customized the new COI website, using the latest technologies, in an effort to provide faculty an enhanced experience when submitting their disclosures. The new website allows users to easily make amendments to previously submitted disclosure forms. Doing so eliminated the need for faculty to create entirely new disclosure forms every year, thereby reducing administrative time.

UTSA faculty can also file disclosures from virtually any location as this new website is accessible on mobile devices. Its responsive web design (RWD) allows the layout of the website to adapt to the size of the screen on any device through which it is being viewed.

The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) Introduces New Technical Support Live Chat Service

November 28, 2016

UTSA students, faculty and staff can now receive technical assistance remotely on any UTSA computing asset or mobile device. This is thanks to a new service called OITConnect Chat Support, which allows users to obtain real-time technical support from the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) OITConnect team.

Previously, users could only create service requests through OITConnect via email, phone, the online portal, or in-person. However, in an effort to further expand the customer support tools it offers to the UTSA community, OIT decided to offer a live chat service.

OITConnect Chat Support enables users to communicate with OIT technicians and conveniently receive assistance from virtually any location. OIT technical support agents are able to directly access affected machines and mobile devices, in order to perform necessary repairs and software installations regardless of whether the device is connected to the UTSA network or public internet.

OITConnect Chat Support allows users to receive instant responses to help resolve any technical concerns that may arise on their devices during OITConnect’s hours of operation. This service further reflects OIT’s dedication to providing top-tier customer service to the university.
OIT Improves Wireless Coverage for the UTSA Sombrilla

December 15, 2016

In the fall of 2016, UTSA’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) began implementing additional wireless access points to help enhance coverage of the university’s network system for students, faculty, and staff. The wireless expansion will be utilized to provide better Internet coverage around the UTSA Sombrilla. Due to architectural limitations, UTSA currently has a limited wireless access point deployment which provides coverage to a portion of the Sombrilla. To help enhance the Wi-Fi, OIT will be placing wireless access points along the overhangs of the buildings surrounding the Sombrilla.

The access points will be installed in front of the overhangs of the McKinney Humanities (MH), Science, Multidisciplinary Studies (MS), Arts, and Main Buildings (MB), as well as the 3rd floor of the John Peace Library (JPL). During this project, the team will input holes in the cover areas to place conduit pathways in the surrounding buildings leaving no exposed wiring and only the access points viewable. This is a multiphase project that consists of: cabling, powering, conduit installation, and installing access points.

Enhancing the Wi-Fi coverage will help benefit many students who enjoy spending time in the Sombrilla area by providing better coverage and signal strength on their wireless devices.
Quarter One

JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH

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The presentation titled “Telecommunications and Infrastructure Collaborative Restructure,” highlighted how the Office of Information Technology (OIT) teams worked together to save funds and share resources by removing old technology, moving to once a year all-inclusive billing model, reassigning staff and duties, upgrading to a new, more efficient database, and restructuring the telecommunications department to allow for better customer service and continuing VOIP service upgrades.

Attendees learned about the requirements and improvements needed to migrate the telephone ticketing system to the OITConnect system and InSight database.
Interim Vice Provost for Information Technology and CIO Bryan Wilson, Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Interim Executive Director of Enterprise Systems and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza, attended the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC) meeting on February 1.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs John Frederick, along with EAB training staff, presented on the SSC tool and how it will help UTSA and UT System Universities improve student success rates. The SSC tool is a predictive algorithm method used by more than 100 institutions across the country to track student performance and determine their success in the degree field. The UTSA Bill and Melinda Gates Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is assisting with advisor training and marketing support for this project.

EAB advises colleges and universities across North America and Europe on general improvement and performance methods through their consulting services, research, and data analytics.

EAB SSC advising tool.
Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon Ed.D., presented at the DREAM 2016 Conference. The conference was held February 23-26 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia as a part of the Gates iPASS Project. The theme for this year’s conference was “Equity and Excellence.”

The session titled, “iPASS Grantee Workshop on Engagement and Communication,” was a special session for iPASS institution grantees. Dr. Kenon presented with iPASS institution leaders on the progress, plans and scope of both iPAS (iPAS 1) and iPASS (iPASS 2).

The DREAM (Data, Reform, Equity, Achievement, Movement) 2016 conference, hosted by Achieving the Dream, provides participants with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of evidence-based policies and practices that close achievement gaps and increase student success all while broadening their influence in the national student success movement (Achieving the Dream, 2016).
Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia, along with representatives from the City of San Antonio and Catapult Systems, presented at the February 25 North SA Chamber’s monthly CIO Breakfast session. Their presentation was on Windows 10: Migration, Management, and Security. The presenters shared their experiences from prior implementations of Windows 10 from within their respective businesses. The presentation provided valuable insight into the benefits of using Windows 10, its features and applied usage, as well as the lessons learned from past implementations and current planning by groups in its implementation of the new Microsoft operating system.
DubLabs Webinar
UTSA: Engaging Students through a Mobile First Strategy

March 2 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Jayashree Iyengar and Wesley Lay

Director of Application Development and Support (ADS) Jayashree Iyengar, ADS Enterprise Systems Programmer Wesley Lay, along with Vice President of Strategy for DubLabs Chris Hopkinson, presented a webinar titled “UTSA: Engaging Students through a Mobile First Strategy,” on March 2.

The webinar, hosted by DubLabs, provided a platform to share what the ADS team learned from their initial mobile app launch, and how UTSA is now meeting student needs with a unified solution. It also provided a demonstration of the UTSA mobile app and the features showcased in the various modules.

DubLabs provides mobile solutions to higher education institutions to help students succeed by engaging through mobile channels.
SXSWedu Conference
OIT and Advising Staff Present Sessions at SXSWedu

March 7-10 | Austin, TX
Participant(s):
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Mary-Margaret Echevarria, Delia Swiger, Ed.D., and Nicole Duff

Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Executive Director of Advising Services Barbara Smith, attended the 30th annual SXSWedu conference, along with Telecommunications Manager Mary-Margaret Echevarria and Communications Specialists Delia Swiger, Ed.D., and Nicole Duff. The education conference was held March 7-10 in Austin, TX.

The team participated in three Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation events, where they focused primarily on highlighting the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant, of which OIT is a recipient. This grant has enabled UTSA to implement several advising and degree planning systems as part of its ongoing effort to improve its student success rates.

Dr. Kenon moderated two round table discussions at the “Personalized Learning and Success” summit, where she engaged in discourse with higher educational professionals and students about real-life challenges related to the sustainability of the grant.

In addition, the entire team conducted a poster presentation, which chronicled UTSA’s journey from the initial Integrated Planning and Advising Services grant (iPAS) to the current grant. Attendees visited UTSA’s booth, where they amassed a wealth of information related to the iPASS grant.

UTSA’s participation in the conference culminated in a panel presentation on “Institutionalizing Student Success at Universities,” in which Dr. Kenon discussed the technologies employed to aid student success as well as OIT’s plans to sustain this initiative.

“Working with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on iPASS over the past three years has provided UTSA a wealth of resources far beyond just funding,” Dr. Kenon shared. “Our three presentations here at SXSWedu highlight that journey and our work campus-wide to support student success initiatives.”

Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., along with other panelists at SXSWedu.
UTSA staff at the Knowledge Tree at SXSWedu.

UTSA staff and Dr. Daniel Greenstein, director of Post Secondary Success Strategy at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation iPASS event during SXSWedu.
Kotter International
Gates Foundation Hosts Kotter International Change Management
Training at UTSA

March 15 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Nicole Duff, Delia Swiger, Ed.D., and
Mary-Margaret Echevarria

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation hosted a Kotter International Change Management training session at UTSA on Tuesday, March 15 in the Travis Room. OIT team members, Telecommunications Manager Mary-Margaret Echevarria and Communications Specialist Nicole Duff, along with several UTSA faculty, staff and advisors participated in the informative all-day session, in which they learned about the “Kotter 8-Step Process for Leading Change” developed by best-selling author and Harvard professor, Dr. John Kotter. This highly interactive session also featured real-life scenarios and discussions mainly centered on the implementation of the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC).

Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Executive Director of Advising Services Barbara Smith and Communications Specialist Delia Swiger Ed.D., all core members of the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) Planning Committee, recorded feedback received from attendees. In addition, members of the Achieving the Dream (ATD) staff, Associate Director of Data, Technology and Analytics, Dr. Mei-Yen Ireland, and Data Coach Leon Hill served as the session’s facilitators. UTSA is one of fourteen iPASS grantee institutions that ATD has agreed to provide technical support to aid student success.
Several members of the Office of Information Technology’s Office of Digital Learning presented at the 13th International Sun Conference on Teaching and Learning on March 17-18, in El Paso, Texas. The theme of the conference “Teaching and Learning Experientially,” focused on how providing active, hands-on learning in an authentic, professional context can fully engage students in their discipline.

Director of Online Learning Marcela Ramirez and Instructional Designer Claudia Arcolin Ph.D., presented on “Game-Based Learning Strategies to Engage and Empower Millennials.” They discussed the learning models and the design approaches to develop game-based activities that promote learning effectiveness, sense of belonging, and empowerment.

In addition, Multimedia Specialist Christopher Cortez and Instructional Designer Mayra Collins presented on “Bridging the Gap: Aesthetics in Instructional Design.” Their presentation discussed a training course, which was developed to engage students in online modules with self-paced lessons and multimedia assets such as videos, graphics, and student activities. The presenters also showed course design examples, student feedback, as well as the benefits of using aesthetics in instructional design.
Instructional Designer Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., and Instructional Development Specialist Michael Brand of the Office of Digital Learning presented at the 19th Annual 2016 Texas Distance Learning Association Conference (TxDLA) whose theme was “Super Heroism.” The conference focused on a variety of topics including: educational technology, innovation and best practices, research, accessibility, cybersecurity, and data analysis. In addition, it addressed faculty and student support, coupled with administration, policy and more.

Arcolin’s presentation was titled, “The Learnengers! Developing Super Powers for the 21st Century Learners.” The “Avengers” are a team of super heroes united to save the world. Each of them has a great power, but together they are invincible. The presentation posed the question, “Can our students discover their talents and strengths working together?” and was designed for teachers to encourage this collaboration method to create a community of Learnengers.

Brand’s presentation “Collaborating on Course Design & Development using OneDrive and Skype,” showcased online collaborative tools that can be used to facilitate interaction between faculty and instructional design teams to develop an online course. This presentation introduced Microsoft OneDrive and Skype for business, explaining how these tools can be employed in the course design and development process.
Reflections of 2016
The Office of Information Technology
Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed
American Educational Research Association (AERA) Meeting
OIT Management at the 2016 AERA Annual Meeting

April 8 - 12 | Washington, D.C.
Presenter(s):
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Sunay Palsole, Ph.D.

Associate Vice Provost for Digital Learning Sunay Palsole, Ph.D., and Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., attended the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2016 Annual Meeting held April 8 – April 12 in Washington, D.C.

The AERA Annual Meeting showcases innovative studies in a wide array of education based research that covers early education through higher education and beyond. The 2016 theme celebrated AERA’s centennial year and revived the same aspirations that started the event: Public Scholarship to Educate Diverse Democracies.

AERA boasts the largest gathering of scholars in the fields of educational research by offering lectures and addresses from industry leaders and prestigious universities. More than 15,000 attendees have congregated to attend more than 2,500 sessions for this 2016 meeting.

Past and present UTSA Barbara Jackson, scholars at the 2016 AERA meeting.
Educational Experience Film Festival ((E2F2))
E2F2 Film Festival Award Ceremony

April 14 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Sunay Palsole, Ph.D., Ernest Hernandez III, Gerard Bustos and Alexandra Roman

The second annual Educational Experience Film Festival (E2F2) award ceremony event, hosted by the Office of Educational Technology, and sponsored by the Office of Information Technology, was held April 14th in the Buena Vista Theater at the Downtown Campus.

E2F2 showcased the many innovative and artistic uses for video and raised awareness of the usefulness of digital media as a teaching tool at the University.

Professor for the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at UTSA Enrique Alemán Jr., Ph.D., presented his keynote address “Stolen Education: The Making of a Research Documentary,” which discussed how his research project turned into a documentary and teaching tool.

The festival recognized achievement for the best videos in the following categories:

- Best academic impact
- Best communication impact
- Best documentary
- Best student project
- Best traditional feature
- Short or animation

The videos submitted by UTSA faculty, staff, and students illustrated the diverse viewpoint of each film maker to capture the audience though varied style and topic.

Enrique Alemán Jr, Ph.D., presenting his keynote speech story.
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) held the 2nd annual OIT Spring Tech Conference on April 20 in the UTSA Main Campus HEB UC Ballroom. UTSA students, faculty, and staff were invited to attend and learn more about technology resources available to them at the university. Interim Vice Provost for IT and Chief Information Officer (CIO) Bryan Wilson welcomed attendees to the OIT Spring Tech Conference and Gartner Executive Partner Dr. Rick Nordtvedt, Ph.D. delivered the keynote presentation titled “Digital Examples from the 2016 CIO Agenda: You, too, can predict the future.”

More than 670 students, faculty, and staff signed up to attend sessions given by knowledgeable OIT staff and top technology providers including Dell, Apple, Qualtrics, Adobe, Microsoft, Top Hat, i>clicker and more.

Participants were able to ask questions about various products and see demos of the newest technology available at UTSA from our technology leaders. Several vendor partners attended the event including Microsoft, ARC, Abacus Computers Inc., Dell, Qualtrics, Top Hat, Randstad, AT&T, Workspace Solutions, Jabra, UTSA Campus Bookstore, and many more.

Overall, the OIT Spring Tech Conference succeeded at promoting and expanding understanding of the technology resources available to the UTSA community.
List of Presentations

» Instructional Designers Melissa Padalecki, Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., and Instructional Development Specialists Patrick Nolan and Diana Amis presented: “Are you leaving Students out? Accessibility Basics for Online Development”

» Interim Vice Provost for IT and CIO Bryan Wilson, Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Interim Executive Director of Enterprise Systems and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinosa and Information Security Operations Officer Kevin Kjosa presented: “Conference room chat with OIT Management”

» Manager of Learning Technologies Dustin Barrows presented: “Classroom Engagement Utilizing TopHat”

» Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D. presented: “Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC)”

» Director of Learning Technologies Joe Tobares, and Assistant Director of Learning Technologies Robert Granado presented: “Increasing Student Engagement in the Classroom with Reef polling and iClicker”

» Senior Information Security Analysts Lance Pritchard, and Brad Cooper, and Information Security Specialist Pebby Garner presented: “Mobile Devices, Websites, and Social Media: Protecting your Data and Yourself”

» Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong De Treviño and Telecommunications Manager Mary-Margaret Echevarria presented: “Office 365, SharePoint Online, BrainStorm Quickhelp Overview”


» OIT Manager of Platform Application Services Mark McCoy presented: “Office Professional Plus/Student Advantage”

» Video Producer Jose Carrillo presented: “PowerPoint Storyboarding for Video Production Requests”

» Director of Innovative Solutions Group Brent League presented: “Research Computing Support”

» Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III presented: “RowdyVision: What’s New in Digital Signage”

Senior Executive Partner at Gartner Rick Nordtvedt, Ph.D., delivers the keynote presentation.

Rosalind Ong De Treviño presents at the OIT Spring Tech Conference.

Kevin Kjosa presents at the OIT Spring Tech Conference.

Rosalind Ong De Treviño presents at the OIT Spring Tech Conference.
Telecommunications Manager Mary-Margaret Echevarria moderated several sessions at the 45th Annual Association for College and University Technology Advancement (ACUTA) Conference and Exhibition held April 24-27 in San Diego, CA. The 2016 conference theme was “Aspire to Connect,” and included presentations by higher education institutions, corporations, and consulting firms.

Echevarria moderated three presentations: “Security in the Age of Tech Innovation,” “Conversation with the Future,” and “Wrap-up to Go,” which featured technology use in education.

“The 45th Annual ACUTA Conference was a very enlightening experience. I attended a Special Sunday Workshop: ‘Leadership Toolkit for Professionals’ to learn how to refine my current leadership skills which provided participants with new ideas on how to improve our current model of service charge back,” said Echevarria.

ACUTA is a nonprofit educational association dedicated to advancing communication and collaboration in higher education communities. The association represents over 1,900 individuals at more than 600 institutions.
North SA Chamber CIO Breakfast
IT Human Capital and Workforce Development

April 28 | San Antonio, TX
Panelist(s):
Ben Garcia

Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia served as a panelist for a discussion on “IT Human Capital and Workforce Development,” at the April CIO Breakfast hosted by the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. The event was held on April 28 at the Petroleum Club of San Antonio.

Garcia, along with Chief Security Officer of Rackspace Brian Kelly and Technology Council Chair and the Director of Workforce Development at New Horizons Computer Learning Center Gary Britton, led the discussion, which focused on an array of topics including talent acquisition, staff augmentations, managed services, local talent and workforce development.

The CIO Breakfast series is a monthly gathering of IT professionals and leaders, sponsored by world-renowned data center services provider CyrusOne. An invitation-only event, it provides participants a forum to engage in discourse about technology-related issues and innovations every month.

Ben Garcia serves as a panelist at the North SA Chamber April CIO Breakfast.
Senior Information Security Analyst Chip Meadows from the UTSA Office of Information Security (OIS), participated in the San Antonio FBI Citizens Academy program. Meadows attended weekly meetings during March-May 2016, under the tutelage and mentorship of staff and agents of the local San Antonio division.

The Citizens Academy unites community leaders from diverse industries and provides them an opportunity to learn about the inner workings of the FBI. As part of the program, leaders attend classes where they are given presentations and participate in exercises aimed at increasing their knowledge about the FBI’s missions, policies, etc.

Some of the topics covered by the curriculum included:

- Practical problems involving evidence collection and preservation.
- FBI jurisdiction and congressional oversight.
- Structure and operation of FBI field offices and resident agencies.
- Fingerprint, forensic, technology, training, and other services.
- Policies and issues: ethics, discipline, communications, civil rights, and criminal trends.
- Firearms training.

“The most beneficial part of the class was access to the Agents and their supervisors,” said Meadows. “I can honestly say I have never met a finer, more professional group in all of my journeys. I have a new appreciation for their jobs, their challenges, and how the Department of Justice works.”
As part of its Integrated Planning and Advising in Student Success (iPASS) initiative, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently hosted a Kotter International Change Management training session at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). UTSA was one of 26 institutions selected nationwide to design and implement projects that enhance support and services impacting student success and degree completion.

Faculty, staff and advisors from UTSA, as well as the university’s iPASS core team members from the Office of Information Technology (OIT), participated in the informative all-day session, which focused on the Kotter 8-Step Process for Leading Change.

The training served as a springboard to help members of the UTSA community and our institution’s iPASS core team identify areas for continued improvement in both our project implementation and adoption efforts. Recording attendee feedback was a big priority for us. Therefore, core members of the iPASS Committee, including Assistant Vice Provost for IT and iPASS Principal Investigator Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Executive Director of Advising Services Barbara Smith, and Communications Specialist Delia Swiger, Ed.D., kept track of the many ideas and comments that our participants were expressing. In the process, we realized that our experience and takeaways might also be relevant for other institutions.

Defining Roles and Securing Stakeholder Buy-In

The highly interactive session featured real-life situations and discussions. These were mainly centered on our implementation of the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC), an initiative set for rollout fall 2016 at UTSA. As it pertained to the EAB SSC, we were able to very clearly outline advisors’ role in student success. The training also helped staff and faculty members to understand exactly how these tools will enhance their own roles within the context of student success.

The result? Each group now has a much better grasp of just how important they are to generating insightful data that will provide a holistic view of each student. Although technological tools and administrative processes are only a part of the entire student success picture, buy-in from members of the university as a whole is absolutely imperative in order for the project to be successful.
Transformative Training on Change Management

During the training, facilitators Dr. Mei-Yen Ireland, Associate Director of Data, Technology and Analytics, and Data Coach Leon Hill of Achieving the Dream showed how the iPASS project’s implementation and some of the concerns surrounding it actually relate to the 8 step process.

All of the steps in the training helped to generate new ideas to strengthen the project. In particular, the team focused on the 4th step, “Communicate for Buy-In,” as successful implementation would require that everyone involved be on board or “buy-in.” (There were, undoubtedly, other steps which related as well.)

Hearing the statistic that 70% of organizations fail to change was staggering. Based on this, we must continue to investigate the challenges that prevent or delay change as they relate to our institution, such as fear of the unknown and the inability to get people to buy-in.

Following the Kotter training, we distributed a survey to collect participant reactions. It was both rewarding and encouraging to see that all attendees found the training to be either useful or very useful, and believed they had a role in change when implementing the EAB/SSC tool. In addition, the majority of attendees stated that they now felt better able to create change in their work area, given the extremely informative training they acquired.

Capturing advisors’ interest in how the work we’re doing for iPASS is woven into their own roles is critical to creating a culture of early adoption and enthusiasm.

Taking Action to Include Faculty

Commentary received from training attendees was insightful, and much of it confirmed the perspectives of the iPASS committee. One of the key takeaways was that advisors want to be actively involved to support our efforts, specifically with regard to communication about any training, outreach, and technology rollout related to the grant.

We have put this suggestion into action by adding several new faculty and staff members to the iPASS committee. In addition, we will open up critical feedback loops with a representative group of our stakeholders through the OIT Faculty Advisory committee. While the OIT Faculty Advisory committee provides recommendations on technology, we plan to include regular input as it pertains to the iPASS project. To that end, we plan for them to meet several times each academic year in order to learn about and discuss upcoming changes.

Hosting this training session has been the perfect opportunity for the iPASS core team to gather candid thoughts from faculty about their role in student success. We’re energized and are now much better prepared to create, lead and manage sustainable change at UTSA.
Several OIT staff members presented at the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) National Conference in St. Louis, MO on May 10. Instructional Designer Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., Associate Vice Provost for Digital Learning, Sunay Palsole, Ph.D., Director of Online Learning Marcela Ramirez, and Instructional Designer Mayra Collins presented a session on the topic Gamification.

During the session titled “Play @ UTSA- Game-Based Learning In Action,” the group discussed learning models and design approaches to develop game-based activities that promote learning effectiveness, sense of belonging, and empowerment. Dr. Palsole also served on the Program and Hospitality committees for the USDLA conference.

The USDLA is a non-profit organization dedicated to online learning, research, development, training, and communications. Founded in 1987, the organization addresses K-12, higher education, and corporate/government training.
May 20 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) will host its annual meeting in the Southwestern United States for the first time in the spring of 2017. Several UTSA faculty members including Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D. met with the President of AERA Dr. Vivian Gadsden and AERA Executive Director Dr. Felice Levine, along with other AERA members, to discuss planning this event, slated for April 27th – May 1st, 2017 in downtown San Antonio.

The Regional Area Scholars Meeting provides AERA members from the upcoming annual meeting's host city a forum to engage in dialogue regarding themes that would be best suited for the annual meeting program. Participants delved into a myriad of topics pertaining to issues in education in the region for ideas for tours, sessions, and other events for next year’s conference.

“This was a wonderful opportunity to be invited by AERA to represent UTSA, OIT, and South Texas for the nation's largest professional organization devoted to scientific study in education,” said Dr. Kenon.

Next year’s AERA meeting will be co-chaired by Dr. Angela Arzubiaga, associate professor at Arizona State University (ASU) and Dr. James Earl Davis, professor at Temple University. It will focus on the theme “Knowledge to Action—Achieving the Promise of Equal Educational Opportunity.”

The meeting’s first two days in San Antonio will coincide with the city’s Fiesta celebrations. This will allow attendees an opportunity to experience San Antonio’s rich and unique culture first-hand.

“This is a first and a really major event for the City of San Antonio and South Texas,” Dr. Kenon stated. The AREA comprises over 250,000 members including faculty, researchers, graduate students and other professionals with experience in workplace education. Current AERA membership from the UTSA Office of Information (OIT) also includes Associate Vice Provost for Digital Learning Sunay Palsole, Project Coordinator for the Customer Relations and Communications (CRC) team Rosalind Ong De Treviño and Communications Specialist Nicole Duff.
Office of Information Technology (OIT) leaders, Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III were part of a panel of experts who presented insight on personalized learning at the New Media Consortium (NMC) webinar. The live webinar was held on May 25th on the topic “Getting Personal.”

The webinar highlighted personalized learning and provided insight from other higher education professionals from across the nation including Vice President for Information Technology and College Services at Montgomery County Community College Celeste Schwartz, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Operations at Kaplan University Keith Brender, and Director of Technology Enhancement Learning (TEL) at Plymouth University Arunangus Chatterjee.

During the webinar, discussants focused on how personalized learning is woven into various aspects of higher education from admissions and advising to course development. Dr. Kenon shared how the work currently underway for advising utilizing DegreeWorks and EAB/SSC is going to provide personalization opportunities and how it integrates with iPASS. Hernandez shared his perspective on how engaging videos can be used to communicate and generate buy-in from students.

The NMC is a community of hundreds of leading universities, colleges, museums, and research centers that stimulates and furthers the exploration and use of new media and technologies for learning and creative expression.
The U.S. Secret Service conducted a cyber security Tabletop Exercise (TTX) with attendees from local businesses, regional law enforcement, higher education, and federal agencies. Information Security Operations Officer Kevin Kjosa, from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) represented The University of Texas at San Antonio during the cyber security exercise. Matt Chevraux, from the United States Secret Service Office of Investigation-Cyber Strategy and Outreach moderated the Regional Task Force Cyber Table Top Exercise held at The University of Texas at San Antonio on May 24.

The exercise was designed to test and socialize processes for responding to a significant cyber incident impacting organizations. Discussions occurred over a series of modules that focused the conversation on specific issues, such as intelligence and information sharing, initial response coordination, mitigation and public affairs. The exercise concluded with lessons learned from the past.

UTSA College of Business, Frost Bank, and the U.S. Secret Service sponsored this extremely informative session.
Innovations in Online Learning (IOL) Conference
Office of Online Learning Hosts 12th Annual IOL Conference

May 25 - 27 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D.
Diana Amis
Dustin Barrows
Ernest Hernandez
James Borrego
Jatin Bhavsar
Joe Tobares
Jose Carrillo
Mayra Collins
Melissa Padalecki
Michael Brand
Patrick Nolan
Sailaja Athyala, Ph.D.
Sunay Palsole, Ph.D.
Vanessa Garza

The 12th Annual Innovations in Online Learning (IOL) conference, hosted by UTSA Office of Online Learning, was held May 25 – 27, at the Hotel Contessa in downtown San Antonio. The theme for the 2016 conference was “I.D.E.A.S for Change,” with the acronym standing for ignite, develop, engage, activate and stimulate.

The IOL conference unites higher education professionals who are involved in online learning for a series of discussions and workshops as well as ignite and peer review sessions focused on ideas that would drive innovation for the future of online learning.

Chief Academic Officer at iDesignEDU Whitney Kilgore served as the opening keynote speaker and presented on the topic “LX Design: From IDEAS to ACTION.” Kilgore discussed the importance of considering the learner experience when designing online courses to effectively meet each student’s needs.

The conference culminated in a closing keynote address provided by the Vice President of Higher Education Policy and Research at Blackboard Inc., Dr. Van L. Davis.

Link(s): http://iolconference.org/
UTSA Office of Information Technology staff presented the following sessions:

- “PowerPoint Storyboard: The Path to Engaging Educational Videos”
  - Producer Jose Carrillo
- “Large Scale Digital Stories: Experiences Assigning Video Projects to 100+ students”
  - Producer Jose Carrillo
- “A Learner-Centered Rubric for Designing and Evaluating Hybrid/Online Courses”
  - Instructional Designer Sailaja Athyala, Ph.D., and Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D.
- “Pajamas & Engineering: Attend class using Skype for Business”
  - Director of Learning Technologies Joe Tobares
  - Manager of Learning Technologies Dustin Barrows
- “Collaborating on Course Design & Development Using Microsoft OneDrive and Skype for Business”
  - Instructional Development Specialist Michael Brand
- “Collaboration is Key when Designing, Developing and Managing a Super-Sized Class”
  - Instructional Designer Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D.
  - Systems Analyst III Jatin Bhavsar
- “From a Passion Project to a Learning Objective: How Your Great Idea for a Video Just Became a Powerful Teaching Tool”
  - Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III
  - Producer James Borrego
- “Improving Accessibility through Universal Design”
  - Instructional Designer Melissa Padalecki and Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D.
  - Instructional Development Specialist Patrick Nolan and Diana Amis
- “BB Hybrid Journey”
  - Instructional Development Specialist Vanessa Garza
The Provost’s Office and Academic Advising provided user training for the new academic advising tool Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC) on June 2 in the North Paseo Building computer lab (NBP 1.412). The Office of Information Technology (OIT) provided support setting up the training and refreshments throughout the day for participants.

The EAB / SSC tool is partially supported by an Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which is a collaboration of the Provost Office, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and the Office of Information Technology at UTSA.

“EAB’s Student Success Collaborative (SSC) combines technology, consulting, and best practice research to help colleges and universities leverage data and analytics to measurably improve student outcomes. SSC members are able to drive impact from insight and leverage real-time data to measure and optimize intervention effectiveness (EAB.com).

Representatives from EAB presented three specific training classes: advisor management, specialist, and advising front desk. Attendees included members of the program leadership team, technical team, specialist team, and administrative staff.
The UTSA Advanced Visualization Laboratory (VizLab), managed by the Office of Information Technology Research Computing Support Group (RCSG), allows researchers from all disciplines of art, science and engineering to conduct simulation and visualization research to better understand complex phenomena and translate data into images on large-scale and high resolution visualization walls or other display devices.

The VizLab contains several pieces of hi tech equipment, such as a “VizWall,” a haptic feedback device used for surgery or injection simulations, an 82” 3D monitor, and two pairs of Oculus Rift virtual reality headsets. The VizWall, originally constructed in 2011, is a 14.4 feet wide by 6 feet tall visualization wall. It is comprised of 24 high-definition (HD) 32” monitors and has a maximum resolution of approximately 98 Million pixels. It is used to display images of classical art work, biological images, engineering images, etc. The resolution is so high that one can zoom in so far and see very minute details, such as brushstrokes in an art painting.

The RCSG completed an upgrade of the monitors in an effort to improve visualization. The team was able to locate and acquire new monitors with a mere 5mm bezel. The smaller bezel sizes have greatly enhanced the visualization experience. RCSG Support Engineers Jeremy Mann and Thomas Freeman explained that in addition to physically mounting the monitors, a lot of staff time and effort went into aligning them properly, both physically and within the Linux application that drives the VizWall monitors. In addition to the alignment, the application also had to be reconfigured for the smaller bezel sizes.

The VizLab is located in the Multi-Disciplinary Studies Building, Room 1.03.06N and is open between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday. Anyone is welcome to stop in for a quick tour, or you can contact Brent League at extension 5877 to arrange a more formalized group tour of the VizLab.

**Upgraded monitors at the Advanced Visualization Laboratory (VizLab).**
Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Senior Information Security Analyst Chip Meadows served as guest speakers at two UTSA Prefreshman Engineering Program (PREP) events. Dr. Kenon and Meadows led interactive presentations for PREP students on June 20th and 21st respectively, in the Flawn Sciences Building.

Dr. Kenon’s presentation provided high school students with information regarding paths to pursue in order to obtain careers in the technology field. Students also learned about some of the functions of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT).

Meadows spoke to Year 1 (middle school) and Year 4 students during two different sessions. During the first session, Year 1 students were provided with some background into Meadows’ interest in the computer field and the educational path that led to his career.

In his presentation to Year 4 students, Meadows focused on a variety of topics including the role of the UTSA Office of Information Security (OIS), programming examples and tips to secure personal computing devices.

The UTSA PREP enables middle and high school students to learn about careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. The seven-week program is designed to target students from groups that are underrepresented in these careers in an effort to diversify STEM fields.
Vanessa Hammle Kenon, Ed.D., presents to PREP students.

Chip Meadows presents to PREP students.
Personalization is a powerful tool; when applied to education, it can improve student success.

Students entering higher education bring their own stories and approaches to learning based on their diverse backgrounds with them. However, their goal is almost always the same: to graduate.

Personalized learning can help them achieve that. The approach adds value and can be used as an effective tool for student success. Technology provides us with the power to personalize higher education for students. Each institution and student within it has his or her own unique journey.

Two leaders from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Office of Information Technology (OIT) recently had the opportunity to share their insight on the subject and discuss the components of UTSA's iPASS project that support personalized learning during a live webinar for the New Media Consortium (NMC).

Collaborating on Personalized Learning in Higher Education

According to a recent NMC publication, personalized learning focuses on the learner driving his or her own learning. The organization's May 25 webinar on the topic, titled “Getting Personal,” is part of its Beyond the Horizon series. This series ties into the NMC’s Horizon Project, which provides advice to educators across the globe to build upon innovation for teaching, learning, and creative inquiry.

The webinar highlighted work currently underway in personalized learning, including support services. The panel discussed personalized learning components, including competency based education, digital curriculum and student support, and communication.

Celeste Schwartz, Ph.D., Vice President for Information Technology and College Services at Montgomery County Community College, moderated the webinar, which included a panel of higher education professionals across the nation. Including UTSA's Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III, Kaplan University’s Vice President for Academic Operations at Kaplan University Keith Brender and the Director of Technology Enhancement Learning (TEL) at Plymouth University, Dr. Arunangus Chatterjee.

Through iPASS, UTSA's leadership has had significant hands-on experience in designing and implementing services to support personalized learning in higher education.

Applying Personalized Learning in Advising and Student Support Services

Several systems to improve student advising have been implemented at UTSA with the support of iPASS resources, including DegreeWorks and the UTSA Campus platform, created using the Educational Advisory Board's Student Success Collaborative. These implementations are constantly reviewed in pursuit of the best tools to support student's needs.
DegreeWorks, the project's educational planning component, has allowed students to explore degree plans and possible paths to graduation. With the introduction of the UTSA Campus platform this year, advisors and other support staff across the university are now able to have a holistic view of their students. These technologies will provide staff with more time to interact with students by increasing information efficiency, while removing any redundancies within various staff members' notes.

The UTSA Campus platform will allow the university to empower students in their decision-making by providing applicable information and resources, ranging from tutoring referrals to recommended financial aid.

**Mobilizing Student Success**

Understanding the student perspective and experience is paramount to success in these initiatives. Because of this, UTSA's OIT surveys students throughout the year in order to identify how to improve technology and aid student success. Recently, mobile accessibility of resources has become a highlighted issue. During the webinar, Dr. Kenon stated that, “Students today are a lot more mobile….you have to take learning to where the students are.” Students seek more than static websites; they want tools that make relevant information accessible quickly and simply.

OIT has improved its mobile app each semester by adding features ranging from class assignments to dining options (after all—a hungry student is not a happy student). One of the goals of the iPASS project is to integrate features from the advising tools into the UTSA mobile app as well. This would allow students to easily access accurate academic information. They could also view administrative issues and even schedule an advising session.

Promotion of the mobile app has expanded this semester. Our marketing campaign will inform students of the app's current features and educate them on how the app can help them in managing their academic careers. Upcoming features will also be highlighted in an effort to increase students' use of tools such as UTSA Campus and DegreeWorks. UTSA is optimistic that providing access to this information in a user-friendly format will empower students to become self-directed learners, and that it will ultimately support student success at the institution.
North SA Chamber CIO Breakfast
OIT Hosts North SA Chamber of Commerce CIO Breakfast

June 23 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Anthony Espinoza, Ben Garcia, Gilbert Cassiano, Jeremy Mann, Keith Trevino, Ryan Key and Zhiwei Wang

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce monthly CIO Breakfast on June 23. The event began in the John Peace Library (JPL) Assembly room and ended with a tour showcasing several OIT managed areas on campus. Several OIT staff members participated in this event, offering insight on technology at UTSA.

Interim Executive Director of Enterprise Systems and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza opened the event and welcomed attendees. Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia discussed UTSA and OIT at a glance and provided a tour overview.

Manager of Communication Infrastructure Services Keith Treviño & Manager of Systems Infrastructure Services Ryan Key served as tour guides for the first stop of the tour, the Library Data Center. Following this, Senior IT Infrastructure Project Manager Gilbert Cassiano led the group on a Research Data Center tour.

The tour concluded at the VizLab where Enterprise Research Solutions Engineer Jeremy Mann discussed the technology used with the VizWall, Oculus, and the Z tablet. Mann and Enterprise Research Application Support Analyst Zhiwei Wang assisted attendees during the hands-on device demonstration. During each tour stop attendees were able to ask questions of OIT staff to learn more about technology at UTSA.
Ben Garcia addresses attendees at the CIO Breakfast hosted by UTSA OIT.

Senior IT Infrastructure Project Manager Gilbert Cassiano leads the Research Data Center tour June 23, 2016.
Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS)
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation iPASS Grant Convening

June 27 - 29 | Seattle, WA
Presenter(s):
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and
Jayashree Iyengar

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff members, Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Director of Application Development and Support Jayashree Iyengar, along with Executive Director of Advising Barbara Smith, and Institutional Research Director of Reporting Brian Cordeau, attended the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) convening: “Preparing for Rollout and Adoption” hosted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and EDUCAUSE in Seattle, WA on June 27 – 29.

The iPASS convening brought together iPASS grantees from across the nation to share ideas and provided time for each institution to have team work sessions and map how their project will transform the advising structure, process, and attitudes. In addition, several vendors were on hand to discuss their products and how they support iPASS success.

During the convening attendees were able to discuss several topics to help guide the implementation of iPASS projects at their campuses including designing student-facing tools, communicating vision and short-term wins, and predictive analytics.

UTSA is one of 24 higher education institutions selected for the iPASS grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant is a collaboration of the Provost’s Office, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and the Office of Information Technology at UTSA.
(Left to Right) UTSA iPASS team members Barbara Smith, Jayashree Iyengar, Brian Cordeau, and Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., (not pictured) meet with EAB SSC Staff during the iPASS Convening.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Vanessa Hammler Kenon Ed.D., in front of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation building where the iPASS convening was held.
Quarter Three
JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER

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2017

Reflections of 2016
The Office of Information Technology

Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed
Incoming students can now have an even more unique experience before their initial day at UTSA, thanks to the orientation module in the UTSA Mobile App. Recently developed by the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Application Development and Support (ADS) team, in conjunction with their vendor DubLabs, this feature allows new ‘Runners and their family access to a wide array of orientation-related information prior to actually attending orientation.

“The orientation module is a good first experience for students because that is their first exposure to UTSA by being part of the orientation,” said Jayashree Iyengar, director of ADS. “From a student-experience perspective, they would be introduced to a mobile solution that would take them from day one through their tenure at UTSA.”

The idea to create an orientation events management module was first mooted by the Office of Orientation and Family Programs. Initially, they explored the possibility of purchasing the Guidebook Events Management application. However, after meeting with the ADS team along with the Enrollment Information Systems department, and reviewing a demo of the UTSA Mobile App, members of the Office of Orientation and Family Programs decided that going in-house to provide such a feature would be a more viable option with long-term benefits for students – leading to its inclusion in the existing UTSA Mobile App.

Created in less than two months, this module underwent a testing phase that was conducted by the Orientation team. Throughout this two-week process, the team tested the functionality of the module, paying careful attention to ensure that developments made to the module did not affect existing modules prior to its rollout. Based on their feedback and expectations, the module was developed.

This module is designed not only to help familiarize new students with UTSA orientation events, but more importantly, to ease their transition into college. In addition, it aims to keep their family up-to-date on orientation schedules and events. Even more beneficial, is the fact that this module contains Banner integration, thus enabling student users to access course information including schedules, announcements, assignments, and grades.

“The biggest advantage of doing it in the mobile app is that students can use the app for their orientation information, then look at course schedules after they have registered,” Iyengar explained. “Students can check their holds, account balances, and learn how to use the mobile app to conduct the rest of their business here at UTSA.”

Screenshots of the Orientation Module in the UTSA Mobile App.
With the new module, users can view complete orientation schedules including locations and a brief description of events planned for both the main and downtown campuses. These schedules are categorized by tracks, namely orange, blue and family and can help users plan their day. Users can also learn about the presenter and provide feedback to help improve the Orientation through the ‘Rate my Session’ button available for some of the optional sessions.

“We worked with DubLabs to implement a rating system so that students could rate certain sessions and give feedback to the orientation team,” explained Bradley Christianson, enterprise system programmer. “The feedback would help the team improve later on and pay attention to what students are looking for.”

Another key feature of this module is its directory of all UTSA faculty and staff. Students can easily access the contact information of their academic advisor, whose number is automatically saved to their contacts list. Users can also virtually meet Orientation Leaders (OLs) and access their contact information as well as view frequently asked questions to find answers to common questions they might have.

“The feedback on the orientation module has been positive thus far,” said Christianson. “We have received feedback regarding limited guest access for family and staff users, but we are looking to improve that experience, especially for family members.”
StudentConnect Service is Launched
The Office of Information Technology’s Student Computing Services (SCS) Launches its StudentConnect Service

July 28 | San Antonio, TX
 Featuring:
 Linda Dunn and James Lee

As of August 1, all registered UTSA students will receive FREE technical assistance on their personal devices thanks to a new service provided by the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Student Computing Services (SCS). This new service called StudentConnect is being introduced as part of OIT’s continued commitment to aiding student success. Along with this change, SCS will be rebranding its other student-centered initiatives under the StudentConnect mantra as well.

These initiatives include Student PrintSpot and MobilePrint services, public computer labs located in the John Peace and downtown libraries and the Business building (BB 2.01.20,) along with staff to assist with software and technical support. In addition, SCS recently installed three secure phone-charging stations on the main and downtown campuses (on the 2nd floor of the BB and 1st floor of the JPL building on the main campus, and on the 1st floor of the Frio Street building next to Starbucks on the downtown campus) and is working on installing PrintSpot printers and kiosks in Student Housing.

In an effort to expand its services for ‘Runners, SCS first successfully piloted StudentConnect in the spring of 2016. The upcoming official launch of StudentConnect aims to further demonstrate how enhancing the student experience at UTSA is one of OIT’s priorities.

“StudentConnect is basically customer service to students,” shared Linda Dunn, Director of SCS. “This service is being implemented due to an OIT initiative aimed at increasing student support. Its implementation is as a result of a team effort that was spearheaded by the SCS team with James Lee, SCS Systems Analyst as team lead.”

StudentConnect stands to be the “go-to” technical resource for students. StudentConnect will allow students the opportunity to receive troubleshooting assistance and technical support on their personal devices. These devices, namely laptops, cell phones and tablets play a pivotal role in providing students access to valuable UTSA resources and academic materials.

Students will receive support on a wide variety of technical concerns ranging from connectivity issues, basic troubleshooting, software installation and virus removal, to help with remotely accessing key resources like student printing, storage, and Office365. Students will also be encouraged to stop by with general technical questions, or for recommendations and technology advice.

The new service, therefore, further reflects OIT’s Student Computing Services’ dedication to ensuring that all students have equal and convenient access to technology resources in order to aid their academic pursuits at UTSA. StudentConnect is intended to help increase student productivity and, ultimately, success.

“StudentConnect is a much needed service for students,” Dunn stated. “Although it will be officially launched August 1, we plan to fully blast it during the first week of school. I think it’s going to be a success.”
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted a UTSA site-visit from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) August 4, 2016. Director of Innovation Tracey Armstrong, Ph.D., visited UTSA to discuss the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, currently underway at the university.

“Student success initiatives are a top priority for UTSA and initiatives like iPASS support campus wide efforts to help students graduate on time and in an efficient financial manner,” said UTSA iPASS grant Principal Investigator (PI) and Assistant Vice Provost of IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan

The iPASS project at UTSA was identified by Dr. Armstrong as an innovative higher education program which aligns with several of the goals of the 60x30TX Higher Education Strategic Plan. The four goals striving to be met by the year 2030 are:

- 60x30: at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.
- Completion: at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor’s, or masters from an institution of higher education in Texas.
- Marketable skills: all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.
- Student debt: undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Discussing Student Success and iPASS

Students, faculty, and staff from offices throughout UTSA came together for an insightful discussion on iPASS with Dr. Armstrong. The conversation included how UTSA became involved in iPASS and the various initiatives on campus that support student success (such as PIVOT for Academic Success). Furthermore, the group discussed the student, faculty, and staff response to the new advising changes, iPASS challenges, and barriers experienced when implementing changes, lessons learned, and how this aligns with the UTSA 2020 Blueprint.

Dr. Kenon stated, “Bringing a project like iPASS to full implementation for student success requires support from numerous areas working together as a team. UTSA faculty and staff, as well as student iPASS committee members, have continually shown their commitment to helping improve graduation rates.”
iPASS is based on the need to transform advising, student support services and systems to increase student success and degree completion. The project focuses on three key student-facing functions:

- Education Planning
- Counseling and Coaching
- Risk targeting and intervention

**Advising and Technology**

The iPASS project focuses on the integration of several systems to form a complete advising platform. UTSA is currently utilizing Ellucian DegreeWorks and will launch the Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus) in the fall of 2016. These two powerful products will change the advising culture at UTSA and provide advisors with tools to engage in more insightful, individualized sessions.

Directors for Academic Advising Sylvia Mansour and Monica Glover shared that over 120 advisors and advising staff have been trained in the new SSC-Campus platform. Mansour said, “Advisors are actively utilizing this platform to take a proactive approach in working with their assigned student caseload. We now have an efficient tool to easily identify special student groups and intervene in a timely manner supporting student success and graduation at UTSA.”

“It was a pleasure to share with Dr. Tracey Armstrong, from THECB, some of the current work UTSA advising is doing and will be doing with DegreeWorks and SSC-Campus. She was able to see firsthand the training and commitment advisors have made to learning, embracing and using SSC-Campus to further support student success,” said Executive Director of Advising Barbara Smith. The advising team at UTSA will continue training this coming fall with Brownbag Lunch Sessions which will allow them the opportunity for continued learning and discussing best practices related to SSC-Campus.

UTSA was one of 24 higher education institutions nationwide selected for the iPASS grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant is a collaboration of the Provost Office, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and the Office of Information Technology at UTSA.

**UTSA’s iPASS Mission**

The iPASS project is dedicated to enhancing student success at UTSA by engaging a campus-wide team to collaboratively establish a system that helps empower students and support staff, improving student interaction from orientation to graduation. Through communication, training, evaluation, and refinement, iPASS will create an adoption environment that fosters welcoming attitudes toward changes. As a grant-funded initiative, the iPASS project strives to improve and determine the best practices and solutions for the benefit of students. As an evergreen project, iPASS will continually evaluate implementations to determine opportunities for increased impact, change pathways to minimize shortcomings, and share data to help improve student graduation and retention rates nationwide.
UTSA’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff member Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D presented at the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communications (TASSCC) conference on August 7-10, 2016 in Galveston, Texas at the Moody Gardens Hotel.

The TASSCC conference is an annual event that brings together educators and professionals to discuss technology and its impact on higher education. Members are given a full agenda outlining the activities and presentations for the conference. TASSCC presentation focuses on topics including Cybersecurity, leadership, data management and IT strategies.

Dr. Kenon, along with IT Staff Augmentation Sales Lead Claire Gregory from ARC Government Solutions presented “Utilizing Highly Visible Project Charts and Vendor Partnerships to Identify Potential Wipe Outs Early.” The presentation gave an overview of useful material for short and long term projects and provided the attendees with both a visual and hands on learning experience. It identified the cost efficient and effective ROI approaches needed to manage a successful project.

During the presentation, members were introduced to project charts and technical venues used in project management to ensure everyone in the organization is on the same page. Both Dr. Kenon and Gregory were able to provide attendees we with multiple options to help ensure they have the correct and suitable staff for a successful new project at their organization. After attending the presentation IT leaders were able to walk away with the proper resources to plan their upcoming projects for the next year.
August 10 - 11 | San Antonio, TX  
Presenter(s):  
Kevin Kjosa

UTSA’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted the University of Texas Information Security (UT InfoSec) UT InfoSec is a semi-annual meeting of information security officers and professionals from all UT institutions. Summer 2016 Conference at UTSA. Over seventy security, internal audit, risk management, and IT professionals attended the conference in the Denman Ballroom on August 10-11, 2016. The conference was sponsored by OPTIV Security, Palo Alto Networks, and Tanium.

The conference has existed for 14 years and gives participants an opportunity to share best practices and receive updates from the UT System. During the conference solution providers are also given the chance to share research on emerging threats along with new innovations to counter them.

UTSA Information Security Operations Officer Kevin Kjosa stated, “It has been a long time since UT InfoSec has been hosted at UTSA and I’m excited it’s returning to our campus.”
On opening day, UTSA’s Associate Professor of Computer Science and Director of the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security (CIAS) Dr. Greg White gave a keynote presentation. Dr. White presented the new online Cyber Security degree program coming to UTSA in the fall of 2017. Dr. White also detailed methods through which UTSA is aiming to provide certification programs so that students with other majors can still receive credit and experience with cyber security.

The UT InfoSec agenda included presentations on a wide-range of topics. Attendees were able to discuss current trends, present new products, and receive practical advice for their organizations from industry leaders and other security professionals.

A few presentation topics included:

- “System Wide IT Updates” by Marg Knox with UT Systems
- “Ransomware Protection” by Deepthi Menon and JR Ramirez with UT Health
- “Incident Response Best Practices” by Shawn Scott and Brian Wrozek with OPTIV Security
- “Strategies for Addressing Cloud Systems” by Joshua Spencer with UT Southwestern


At the end of the day, participants were able to converse during an open discussion about presentations, policies, and technical issues at their institutions. The UT InfoSec is a great opportunity for cohesion within the UT information security community. IT continues to provide a forum for the community to share experiences and learn about the latest trends in information security.
August 15 | San Antonio, TX
Author(s): Rosalind Ong De Treviño
Featuring: Brent League

Technology departments have moved far beyond break fix solutions. Across industries, IT is asked to develop innovative solutions that support enterprise needs surpassing standard computing to support the mission and vision of the organization. At UTSA this often means research.

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) was formed by a committee of faculty researchers with support from OIT to provide necessary support for UTSA researchers who are dependent on high performance computing.

The RCSG, led by Director of Research Computing Support and Innovative Solutions Brent League supports UTSA’s research community by facilitating growth, enabling productivity and innovation, maintaining and supporting the Research Data Center, offering High Performance Computing solutions and managing the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab).

High Performance Computing Support and Tier One

One of the goals of the university is to reach Tier One research intuition status. Across disciplines from art to neuroscience, research has increased and similarly the requirement to have tools to collect and interpret large data sets. The RCSG’s main goal is to support world class researchers, which directly supports the 2020 Blueprint priority of innovative research and discovery. The 2020 Blueprint, which builds upon the university’s strategic plan was developed to maintain the momentum toward Tier One which was seen with the 2016 Shared vision.

The UTSA Research Data Center houses high performance computing equipment that are categorized as UTSA research or grant funded. Through RCSG, faculty and student researchers now have access to computing, storage and visualization resources to support research that has specialized or highly intensive computation, storage, bandwidth or graphics requirements. “In the past, faculty researchers were encumbered with providing technical support for their computer systems,” stated Brent League, “but now OIT’s Research Computing Support Group has stepped in to fill that role, leaving faculty researchers to focus on the scientific goals of their research.”

VizLab tour presentation.

Link(s): http://vizlab.utsa.edu/
https://tinyurl.com/h8bh65f
Interactive Collaborative and Innovative Tools

Previously a showcase for technology, with the RCSG team’s support the VizLab is now a core research facility that allows researchers from all disciplines of art, science and engineering to conduct simulation and visualization research to better understand complex phenomena and translate data into images on large-scale and high resolution visualization walls or other display devices. The laboratory is staffed by OIT RCSG and supports UTSA’s mission of teaching, research and community engagement and contributes to UTSA’s goal to recruit the world’s top computational researchers.

There are several resources available through the VizLab including:

- The VizWall, the VizLab’s 14.4’ by 6’ tall visualization wall. It is comprised of 24 high-definition (HD) 30” monitors and has a maximum resolution of 98 million pixels.
- SHAMU, which is the largest high performance computation cluster at the university. It consists of 80 computation nodes, 1328 CPU Cores, 16 TB of shared memory and 96 TB of shared storage.
- NEMO, a high performance computation cluster for the VizLab. It consists of 12 computational nodes and is powered by dual Hex-Core Intel Xeon X5660 2.80 GHz processors (12M Cache) and dual nVIDIA Quadro FX 5800 graphics cards (4GB each).
- Haptic manipulators, which provide researchers and students a tactile experience with virtual models in computer-generated simulations.
- Oculus Rift virtual reality (VR) headsets, which use state-of-the-art displays and optics designed specifically for VR.
- Z Space, an interactive 3D teaching tablet that allows users to visualize, create and experience in ways beyond the traditional computation environment.

The RCSG is working to make sure that the technology available is not simply perceived as a novelty but are teaching tools that can be used to create interactive approaches to learning and research. The technology and resources are available at no additional cost to faculty and students. An increase in interest and use of these impressive resources to enhance and expand research at UTSA is anticipated. From research on interactive teaching visualizing Maya and other architectural sites to predicting tumor growth, the research possibilities are endless.

*UTSA Advanced Visualization Laboratory is managed by the Office of Information Technology and has been funded by the National Science Foundation under the Major Research Instrumentation Program.*
UTSA faculty, staff, researchers, and students were given the opportunity to attend MATLAB seminars at UTSA organized by the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG). More than 60 attendees showed up for the sessions presented by a MathWorks engineer. The sessions were held on August 18 in the North Paseo Building on the Main Campus. These sessions gave the UTSA community an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about how MATLAB can be used to enhance their research.

The MATLAB platform is optimized for solving engineering and scientific problems. It is used in a wide array of industries including automotive active safety systems, health monitoring devices, and LTE cellular networks. “It is used for machine learning, signal processing, image processing, computer vision, communications, computational finance, control design, robotics, and much more.” (www.mathworks.com/products/matlab/) Two technical sessions were offered for UTSA faculty, staff, researchers, and students to learn more about MATLAB.

Programming and Parallel Computing with MATLAB

During the first session participants learned about the programming capabilities in MATLAB, ways to be more productive working with MATLAB, and how to share your algorithms and applications with others who do not have MATLAB.

Additionally, at the second session participants were given the opportunity to learn to solve computational and data-intensive problems, were introduced to high-level programming constructs, and were showed how to overcome the desktop computer memory limits and solve problems that require manipulating very large matrices by distributing data. They also learned how users can run the same application on a single machine (Parallel Computing Toolbox) and on a large scale computing resource such as a cluster (MATLAB Distributed Computing Server.)
Access College and Excel Scholar Program (ACE)
First-Generation UTSA Alumna Receives Office of Information Technology,
Tomas Rivera Center Laptop Award

September 7 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Ben Garcia

The UTSA Office of Information Technology, in collaboration with the UTSA Tomas Rivera Center for Student Success, named Martha De Los Reyes the recipient of its 2016 Laptop Award. De Los Reyes, a ‘16 alumna, was honored on September 7 at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)/Access College and Excel (ACE) Scholar Program Award Ceremony, which is held annually at the UTSA Downtown Campus.

The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Tomas Rivera Center (TRC) recognize outstanding graduates of the ACE Scholar Program, who have obtained a GPA of at least 2.50, and exemplified strong community and campus involvement while at UTSA. The program is specifically designed to assist freshmen from certain high schools with smoothly transitioning into a four-year university in order to earn their bachelor’s degree.

“Another one of the things we look for is that we’d like candidates to graduate in four,” said Leticia Longoria-Fisher, assistant director for the TRC Downtown Campus. “That’s a big criteria.”

De Los Reyes obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology in May. During her academic sojourn, she balanced her studies with enriching extra-curricular activities and was actively involved in the UTSA and San Antonio communities. She served as a member of the UTSA Psychology Club, Protectors of Animal Welfare and Safety (PAWS) and the TRC Service Learning project titled “Graffiti Wipe Out.”

In addition, she devoted countless hours as a volunteer at the Guadalupe Community Center, the Society for Animal Rescue and Adoption (SARA) Sanctuary in Seguin, as well as Habitat for Humanity. De Los Reyes also frequently volunteered at the Battered Women’s Shelter and the San Antonio Food Bank.

“Martha was a very precise student and is a very hard worker,” said Longoria-Fisher. “Being a first-generation student, she didn’t have that help at home and during our advising sessions or in class she asked those questions that were so important. That helped her to not only graduate with her psychology degree but to graduate in four.”

At the award ceremony, De Los Reyes was presented with a laptop, tablet, accessories and an award certificate by Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Executive Director of Development for HACU John Moder, Ph.D. Professor and Chair in the UTSA Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Enrique Alemán Ph.D., served as the ceremony’s inspirational keynote speaker.

“We are very proud of her,” said Longoria-Fisher. “Martha is looking forward to giving back and working full-time with first-generation students.”

In 2003, UTSA formed a partnership with HACU, allowing the university to receive funding from a collaboration that HACU once had with the former technology hardware company, Gateway. This partnership enables OIT to provide laptop awards for selected ACE Scholar Program graduates annually to help expand technology access.
2016 OIT Meet and Greet
The Office of Online Learning Welcomes New Faculty at the “2016 OIT Meet and Greet”

September 15 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Anthony Espinoza, Ben Garcia, Brad Cooper, Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., Jose Carrillo, Joe Tobares, Linda Dunn, Marcela Ramirez, Nicole Duff, Rosalind Ong De Treviño, Sailaja Athyala, Ph.D., and Tamara Popescu

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Online Learning department hosted its second annual “OIT Meet and Greet” on Thursday, September 15th from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The FREE event, which was held in the John Peace Library Faculty Center Conference Room (JPL 4.04.12C), is designed to inform new UTSA faculty about ways to leverage technology to enhance learning as well as the services and resources offered by OIT.

During the session, attendees were welcomed by Interim Executive Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza. In addition, attendees had the opportunity to listen to a series of breakout presentations led by several OIT managers and staff members including:

- Marcela Ramirez, Director of Online Learning
  -Presented on the Mission of the Office of Online Learning
- Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., Instructional Designer
  -Presented on Instructional Design and Development
- Tamara Popescu, Systems Analyst III
  -Presented on Support and Training
- Ben Garcia, Director of Customer Service and Operations Support and Linda Dunn, Director of Student Computing Services
  -Presented on Customer Service and OITConnect
- Jose Carrillo, Video Producer
  -Presented on Video Production
- Joe Tobares, Director of Learning Technologies
  -Presented on Learning Technologies
- Brad Cooper, Senior Information Security Analyst
  -Presented on Security Standards and Tips
- Rosalind Ong De Treviño, Project Coordinator and Nicole Duff, Communications Specialist
  -Presented on Social Media and OIT Training

Attendees were also treated to light refreshments and provided with informational handouts and other takeaways during the session. The event concluded with a thank you and closing remarks from Instructional Designer from the Office of Online Learning Sailaja Athyala, Ph.D.

OIT offers an array of FREE resources to help enhance faculty’s as well as students’ experiences at UTSA.
Anthony Espinoza welcomes new faculty at 2016 OIT Meet and Greet.

Ben Garcia presents at the 2016 OIT Meet and Greet.
When Whatcom Community College started reaching out to students who were in danger of failing a course, the faculty and administrators were happily surprised by the student response.

“Students were very, very happy to receive the early alert,” recalls Ward Naf, Whatcom College’s IT director. “Quite a few had no idea that they were really in trouble or that their faculty were worried about them.”

Whatcom is one of an increasing number of colleges and universities that have started using a suite of online advising tools called iPASS, which stands for Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success. Early alert, for example, automatically flags students who have repeated absences or missed assignments for in-person follow-up. This allows the student to get back on track. Since implementing iPASS, Whatcom has seen fall-to-winter retention rates increase by 5 percentage points compared to the previous year.

Promising interventions such as iPASS are important not only for students—for whom earning a postsecondary credential is the surest path to the middle class—but also for the U.S. economy. By 2025, two-thirds of all jobs will require education beyond high school. But, at the current rate, the U.S. is expected to face a shortfall of 11 million skilled workers. Central to the problem is the shocking statistic that half of students who start a postsecondary program never reach graduation. The percentage is even higher for the new student majority—including first-generation college students, students from low-income backgrounds, part-time enrollees, working students, and students who are raising children. That’s why it’s encouraging that advisors at several colleges say that the new student majority—who often have the fewest supports and the least room for a misstep in their educational journeys—are among the most enthusiastic users of iPASS.

Jessica, who was the first in her family to go to college when she enrolled at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), received kudos messages—rather than alerts—from the early alert tool.

“The kudos messages are reassuring,” says Jessica. “If you do well on a test, it encourages you to keep it up. I'd print them out and keep them in my desk or with my notes as an extra reminder.” Jessica kept up her strong habits and graduated last spring.

Another iPASS tool helps students see which courses will move them closer to their certificate or degree. Without the tool, many students were inadvertently enrolling in classes and earning credits that didn’t count toward their program. The extra time and expense of taking more courses than they needed delayed their graduation and increased their chances of leaving without a credential.

Antonia Ceballos, academic advisor and iPASS coordinator at Austin Community College, remembers the pre-iPASS days of long lines of students waiting to talk to an advisor for tasks such as selecting courses or tracking their grade point average. Evening and weekend students had a particularly difficult time finding an hour or more to stand in line—in addition to work, family, and other commitments.

But now, students at Austin Community College and other institutions can use their computer, tablet, or mobile phone to choose their courses and to ask questions and get answers. For colleges and universities, no longer needing to track down written transcripts or manually process registration forms allows advisors more time to help students who face other challenges—such as with finances or transportation—that otherwise could lead to them dropping out.
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., assistant vice provost for information technology at UTSA, says that implementing iPASS had the added benefit of leading students to become more self-directed. They suddenly want to talk not just about the upcoming quarter or semester, but about years into the future.

When I went to college, I remember the excitement of discovering the new possibilities that postsecondary education opens up. It doesn’t surprise me at all that today’s college students are eager to reach their goals and plot their own path to the credential that will change their lives and help them cross the bridge to opportunity.

Rosalind Ong De Treviño talks to incoming students about resources for student success.
The Learning Technologies team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) has created a new learning space called the Learning Studio to help acquaint the UTSA community with new technologies and resources that are readily available to enhance their academic experience at UTSA.

“This will be a maker space, so we can have everyone test out new technologies and resources. From there, we will decide what we can set up technology-wise in our general purpose classrooms and active learning spaces,” said Joe Tobares, director of Learning Technologies. “Because of the elements we are installing in the Learning Studio, we hope to help instructors and learners find ways to collaborate better, which is the most important feature of an Active Learning Space.”

Attendees of the Learning Studio will have the chance to experience new technologies and resources such as wireless media devices, which allow the user to project to the display from wherever they are sitting. In addition, attendees will be able to test out furniture that is flexible and allows for different arrangements and easier collaboration.

“The Learning Studio is one of the outcomes of research we did via a survey, which we offered to faculty,” Tobares explained. “From the results, we identified that faculty wanted things that already exist in the classroom, but didn’t exactly know how to use them or that they were available.”

The Learning Studio will also offer FREE training opportunities for students, faculty and staff to help increase their awareness of the OIT products and services that are available to enhance their academic experience at UTSA. The Learning Technologies team plans to work in conjunction with other OIT areas, such as Support Services and the Office of Online Learning, in hopes that this will help the UTSA community maximize its use of OIT-offered products and services software.

These products and services include Microsoft Office Professional Plus and OneDrive for Business, which are offered at no cost. In addition, Tobares hopes that students and faculty will be able to use the Learning Studio to exchange knowledge about how they use technology in their daily lives and how it can be incorporated into the classroom.

The course offerings during the Learning Studio will focus on an array of topics centered on leveraging technology to enhance learning. A few of the courses will be invitation-only, but the majority will be open to all students, faculty, and staff who are interested in attending.

“We have a service catalog about what OIT provides,” Tobares continued. “However, we want to actually show them how to use these products effectively. My expectation is that this will become the place where we explore and evolve the teaching and learning experience at UTSA.”
Reflections of 2016
The Office of Information Technology

Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) held its fall OIT Student Innovation Coalition meeting on October 6 in the Travis room (UC 2.202) from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Approximately 80 students were treated to lunch and given presentations from Academic Advising and OIT staff representing various areas in technology that impact students at UTSA.

OIT Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong De Treviño, announced the OIT Spring Tech Conference 2017 and invited students to attend.

• The OIT Spring Tech Conference is a full day conference with presentations, a vendor fair, and keynote lunch. The event is FREE and open to all UTSA students, faculty, and staff. In addition to learning about OIT services available at UTSA, attendees also learn about technology updates from vendors like Microsoft and Apple.

Program Coordinator for Academic Advising Amanda Garcia & Director for Academic Advising Sylvia Mansour, discussed DegreeWorks the degree planning tool at UTSA. OIT Communications Specialist Danicia Steele, followed this presentation with a focus group session in which she asked students for their feedback on the DegreeWorks tool. DegreeWorks is one of the advising tools that OIT assisted with implementing while a recipient of the initial Integrated Planning and Advising Systems (IPAS) grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Following this grant UTSA was awarded a second Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant, the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS). This grant is a collaborative effort between the Provost Office, Academic Advising, and OIT.

Steele also led a focus group on Office 365 OneDrive for Business.

• OneDrive for Business is a cloud storage solution that provides students one terabyte (TB) of storage. The versatility of the cloud allows users to access their files from virtually anywhere with an internet connection. Other features of using OneDrive for Business are the abilities to easily share files, co-author, and view version history.

Nicole Duff also an OIT communications specialist, provided information on the UTSA Mobile App and Office ProPlus and conducted focus group sessions in which she gathered information on students’ awareness of these OIT products and services as well as their feedback:

• The UTSA Mobile App allows users to set reminders for university events, check account balances, view class schedules and assignments, view campus maps, and much more. OIT continually reviews the mobile app and adds new features.
• Microsoft Office ProPlus makes full versions of Microsoft office software including: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, and Skype for Business available to students at no charge. UTSA students are eligible to download five free copies of this product.

Customer Support Supervisor **Edgar Madrigal**, Systems Analyst **James Lee**, and Student Lab Assistant Owen Gonzalez, provided an overview of Student Computing Services (SCS), PrintSpot, and mobile printing. Additionally they discussed Office 365, OneDrive for Business and Office ProPlus.

• StudentConnect is a service that was launched this semester to provide technical support to students with issues on their personal devices (laptops, tablets, and phones). Students can stop by one of the Student Computing Services labs (Business Building Lab, JPL 2nd Floor Commons, and Downtown Library lab).

Students provided great feedback throughout the event and asked pertinent follow-up questions to presenters. The event concluded with the open discussion in which students brought up issues and feedback to improve student technology services and managers provided insight.

The Student Innovation Coalition was a great opportunity for students to learn about services available to them through OIT, and for OIT leadership to learn about student perceptions. OIT holds this event in the fall and spring each year to outreach to students.
Learning Playgrounds Showcase Modern Technology and Furnishing to be Incorporated into Active Learning Classroom (ALCs)

October 17 | San Antonio, TX
Presenter(s):
Joe Tobares

The next generation of innovative classrooms, which will feature unique technology and an eclectic mix of modern furnishings, will soon be rolling out at UTSA. As part of its on-going effort to familiarize UTSA faculty and staff with the make-up and layout of these Active Learning Classrooms (ALCs), the Learning Technologies team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) is facilitating two Learning Playgrounds.

The Learning Technologies team, in conjunction with the Academy for Distinguished Teacher Scholars (ADTS), is spearheading the implementation of ALCs which are set to be launched in spring 2017. Through the strategic layout of their collaborative furniture as well as their leveraging of technology to enhance learning, ALCs will encourage increased engagement, teamwork, and ultimately success amongst UTSA students.

“After surveying faculty and discussing the results of those surveys, we found out that a lot of faculty knew what they wanted, but hadn’t seen what was out there,” said Joe Tobares, director of Learning Technologies. “Instead of sending them to conferences, we decided to bring stuff to them so they could see what was available.”

This led the team to organize two Learning Playgrounds to help acquaint faculty and staff with the new initiative. Over the summer, Tobares and his team first explored the idea of creating the playground which was then finalized in late August. They garnered the support of several manufacturers including Steelcase, Panasonic and Teknion to help them bring this idea to fruition.
Comprising furniture with distinctive names like ‘The Thread,’ ‘Verb,’ and ‘The Brody,’ as well as state-of-the-art technology, these Learning Playgrounds closely mirror ALCs in their appearance. Not only will these playgrounds enable faculty, staff and students to experience the visual and tactile elements of the projected next generation classrooms which differ in design and layout from traditional classrooms, but they will also allow them to share their input on the redesign process.

In addition to movable chairs with cup holders in some instances, the Learning Playgrounds feature an array of furnishings designed to increase engagement and peer-to-peer interaction among students including:

- The Verb Whiteboard: These detachable dry erase boards can be attached to students’ desks to help them with visual representations during group activities. It can also act as a barrier for privacy during test-taking.
- Buoy: These height-adjustable stools, which are available in vibrant colors, can be easily moved to support peer-to-peer collaboration among students.

The Learning Playgrounds will also feature touch screen interactive monitors, a variety of laptop computers and wireless display devices, which will allow students of ALCs to wirelessly present screens through a device called Solstice.

“I think it’s important for faculty and students to see the showcase and provide feedback to us as the classrooms are where they spend most of their time on campus,” said Tobares. “I want everyone to have a part in creating an environment that is designed for collaborative learning and help spark ideas on how we can improve student success together.”

All UTSA Faculty and Staff were invited to visit the Learning Playground showcase in the Main Building (M.B 0.224) from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays:
1. Learning Playground 1: October 11th – October 20th
2. Learning Playground 2: October 25th – November 4th
Several Office of Information Technology (OIT) areas collaborated with the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars (ADTS) at UTSA which hosted a Shared Experiences Forum. According to the UTSA ADTS webpage, “The academy is charged with providing institutional leadership and guidance for excellent teaching at UTSA through activities such as mentoring new faculty or developing seminars on teaching excellence; and with providing guidance and feedback for Faculty Center programs and initiatives related to teaching and learning.”

The forum, held October 12, 2016, was a live stream focused on the topic ‘Why teach an online or hybrid course?’ The forum provided attendees the opportunity to discuss teaching and learning best practices as well as review the support available to faculty interested in designing online and hybrid courses. Tools such as Skype for Business as an alternative to office hours for courses not meeting face-to-face were also discussed.

Support for the forum was provided by the OIT Video Production Group (VPG), Online Learning (OL), and Learning Technologies (LT).

- VPG Manager Gerard Bustos was the live stream producer for the event. Additionally, Producer James Borrego served as Technical Director and Producers Stephen Matthews and Jose Carrillo operated the cameras. Providing a livestream to events such as the Shared Experiences Forum increases exposure of services available to faculty to support student success. “It’s important for us to support events like the Shared Experiences Forum live stream production because collaborating with faculty in order to improve the student experience, exceedingly merits the knowledge and professionalism our group offers to live webcasting,” said Bustos.

- The OL staff members, Multimedia Designer Chris Cortez and Instructional Development Specialist Diana Amis, assisted with the creation of the look and feel for the marketing elements, including the blast emails and certificate design. In additional, as OL staff works closely with faculty designing hybrid and online courses, OL suggested candidates for the panel discussion.

- LT staff supported the audio-visual needs of the event and ran the audio feed for the forum. They worked with the Faculty Center to determine additional technology needed to ensure the event ran smoothly. LT Manager Dustin Barrows stated, “The discussion of how technology can be used for teaching and learning is paramount to our mission and we feel that assisting with events like this will further our understanding of what faculty needs from the technology.”

The forum included a panel presentation and discussion from faculty across several disciplines who are experienced hybrid course instructors and was moderated by Dr. Thomas Cannon, senior lecturer in the UTSA College of Business. “We have great collaboration with the ADTS, particularly on faculty development opportunities related to using technology for teaching and learning. Since the forum was about online and hybrid teaching and learning, it was a great opportunity for us to have a presence with faculty interested in these fields, answer questions base on experience and research, and support the faculty who has worked with us in the design and development of their courses,” shared Director of Online Learning Marcela Ramirez. “ADTS is a great bridge to connect faculty and digital learning opportunities.”
Splunk Software Implementation

Splunk Software Will Soon Enable OIT to Enhance Application Services Offered to the UTSA Community

October 17 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Mauricio Sandoval

The Enterprise Managed Customer Solutions team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) is currently working on implementing Splunk, a popular software which converts machine-generated data into valuable insights also known as operational intelligence. This particular software, once deployed, will help to streamline OIT’s data analysis and reporting processes.

“It’s amazing technology and could help a lot of groups that have their own services and customers to support,” said Mauricio Sandoval, assistant director of Enterprise Managed Customer Solutions. “It can give them insight into the devices, applications, hardware, and security that their services rely on, eliminating the need for access to restricted technologies and with real-time data.”

Currently used in over 110 countries around the world, Splunk can prove particularly beneficial for the UTSA community. Not only will Splunk enable OIT to easily monitor usage and trends of applications and other resources throughout the university, but it can help OIT quickly identify issues in its infrastructure. This can potentially help OIT increase its service uptime as part of its commitment to enhancing the services it provides to the UTSA community.

“We could potentially prevent outages, ramp up resources during registrations and quickly identify over or underutilized resources,” Sandoval explained.

Although in the early stages of implementation at UTSA, this automated software can be used to acquire machine data from key systems. This includes data from the student information system (SIS) Banner, the learning management system (LMS) Blackboard, as well as mobile applications and other IT operations, which would have otherwise been time-consuming and tedious to obtain. Data parsed from these systems, especially Banner, which the team hopes to target first, can help OIT identify student usage metrics and increase system performance.

OIT intends to first utilize this service and then extend it to other departments and offices at UTSA, according to Sandoval. “Splunk can give UTSA the ability to report, analyze trends, alert, and predict behavior on key services or applications,” Sandoval continued. “It can bridge technologies and IT groups together to give us a better understanding and view of all processes that make up a service.”
Video Production Group Provides Guidance to Students on Filmmaking in Black Women, Beyoncé, and Popular Culture Course

October 19 | San Antonio, TX  
Presenter(s):  
Jose Carrillo and James Borrego

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Video Production Group (VPG) recently collaborated with UTSA’s Associate Professor Kinitra D. Brooks, Ph.D. in the Department of English to offer multimedia training and insight on the filmmaking process for the course “Black Women, Beyoncé & Popular Culture” (ENG 3613/AAS 4013/WS 4953). The assistance provided by VPG will support students as they complete a three-minute avant-garde film project consisting of four components: script, storyboard, video, and analysis.

The course, taught by Dr. Brooks, uses pop star Beyoncé Knowles’ 2016 audiovisual project, Lemonade, to study “sociocultural issues that are most prominent in black womanhood through black feminist theory, literature, music, and film” according to the course description. This course demonstrates innovation and has made headlines worldwide on the internet in several news media groups including International Business Times, ABC News, Cosmopolitan, and higher education publications, increasing the university’s visibility.

Multimedia Specialist II Jose Carrillo and Senior Producer James Borrego have spoken to the class about Creating Engaging Videos: Demystifying the Process. During this presentation students were introduced to the phases of video production: pre-production, production, and post production. In addition, Carrillo assisted student with identifying and using available editing apps and tools to create their video project. The VPG staff also provided hands-on technical guidance to Dr. Brooks’ class, in a computer lab setting, for students working to complete video projects for the course on October 19.

As part of OIT’s strategy to support the university to achieve Tier One status, OIT seeks increased opportunities to collaborate with students, faculty, and staff. Borrego stated that the course, “… gives us an opportunity to share our film and video experience and knowledge with students who are now required to create videos or digital artifacts to help bring meaning to their learning. Students nowadays are immersed in digital technology and now they are tasked with using that technology to develop digital content to help them digest the subject matter.”
UTSA’s Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., participated in multiple roles at the 46th Annual International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP) meeting in 2016. The meeting was held October 18-21 in New Orleans, Louisiana and focused on the theme Planning for Educational Transformation across the Globe: Goals, Processes, and Outcomes.

Dr. Kenon presented a session titled ‘Exploration of the Growing Importance of Educational Planning for Workplace Learning and Professional Development in the Global Workforce’ which focused on the exploration of the growing importance of educational planning for workplace learning and professional development in the global workforce.

As a panelist for the session, ‘Educational Reform Strategies’ Dr. Kenon shared her perspective on the lack of continuity between lower (secondary education) and higher education.

Dr. Kenon also served as a discussant for two sessions, ‘Expanding Access and Opportunity to Education’ and ‘Challenges, Caveats and Educational Reform Models.’

The ISEP conference brings together participants worldwide to discuss the latest trends and current events in educational planning and policy. ISEP’s mission is to “improve education through the application of planning processes (ISEP Website).”
UTSA’s Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., was the opening presenter at this year’s Unifying Mobility Conference. Held on October 25th at the Hyatt Regency in Garden Grove, California, the conference was hosted by DubLabs, the vendor for the UTSA Mobile App.

During her presentation titled “Collaborative! Innovative! Successful!,” Dr. Kenon shared some of the technology implemented at UTSA to improve student success and graduation rates.

Her presentation provided attendees with a glimpse into some of the features of the UTSA Mobile App, which was developed thanks to the collaboration of the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Application Development and Support (ADS) team and DubLabs. This app helps to enhance UTSA students’ academic and social experiences by providing them access to course information, grades, campus events and other information at their finger-tips.

In addition, Dr. Kenon discussed some of the advising technology at UTSA and scheduled to go mobile as part of UTSA’s OIT Mobile-First Strategy Initiative thanks to the funding and support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant. These technologies include the degree auditing tool DegreeWorks and the Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative Campus (EAB/SSC Campus), the latter of which will be rolled out in spring 2017.

Serving more than 150 universities across the United States, DubLabs assists schools in developing unified mobile strategies to foster student success and retention. UTSA is currently one of 110 four-year universities that has unified its student success tools into its mobile app.
Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., served as a panelist at the 2016 EDUCAUSE conference held October 25-28 in Anaheim, California. Dr. Kenon along with Assistant Director of the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Columbia University Melinda Karp, Ph.D., and the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and Dean of the College of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Central Florida Elizabeth Dooley, Ph.D., led a breakout session on the subject “Institutional Programs for Student Success: The Next Wave- Part 1.”

The 50-minute session enabled the moderators to share their experiences with various technologies that have been implemented at their respective institutions to help streamline the advising process for students, advisors and faculty. During the session, Dr. Kenon discussed some of the technologies that UTSA has implemented, such as the online degree auditing tool DegreeWorks and its plans to implement the Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative (EAB/SSC), which is set for a spring 2017 rollout. The panel also answered detailed questions from the audience on the current status with the tools at our campus as well as future plans and goals.

The Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has partially funded the marketing and mobile integration efforts for both the EAB/SSC and DegreeWorks as well as provided support for training opportunities and professional development.

Each year, EDUCAUSE members convene to discuss IT best practices, experiences and strategies employed to improve learning and student success.
On October 28th 2016, the UTSA Office of Online Learning team hosted the 2016 Fall Faculty Showcase Presentations. The purpose of the event was two-fold:

1. Recognize some of UTSA’s faculty innovators teaching hybrid/online courses who are promoting our University mission towards becoming a Tier 1 institution, and
2. Share ideas and best teaching practices with other faculty - from tools integration and course management strategies to enhance student learning.

The event took place in the Group Spot at the John Peace Library (JPL 2.01.16) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. During the first two hours approximately 20 UTSA instructors’ hybrid or online courses were showcased with their best teaching practices and the strategies they use to help enhance student learning. Each instructor’s course was displayed on a computer station and included an information card. The information card contained the name of the instructor, name of the course being displayed, and three unique features being used in their course. The instructors were available at each station to address any questions and share ideas with other faculty to help incorporate the strategies presented into future courses.

“Faculty got an opportunity to see how the Office of Online Learning is collaborating with instructors on course design and applying best teaching and instructional practices to help the learner be more successful” Instructional Designer Dr. Sailaja Athyala stated. “We know there is a demand for hybrid and online courses, so we want the faculty to come and learn effective pedagogical practices and learner-centered instructional practices to be incorporated into their hybrid/online courses.”

After the showcase presentations, the instructors who showcased their courses were invited to an open discussion to provide the Office of Online Learning with feedback and suggestions. This was an effort to build an online learning community, where instructors can network with other faculty who are teaching hybrid or online course and share best practices.

The faculty showcase was beneficial to all instructors who are looking to design or enhance their hybrid/online courses. All UTSA faculty are encouraged to attend, learn, discuss, and integrate the ideas into their courses. Dr. Athyala stated ‘Instructors in the showcase are being recognized for their best practices, instructional strategies, and course design issues which leads to student success and eventually support the university’s mission to become a Tier One institution.”
OIT staff engage participants at the Fall Faculty Showcase.

Vanessa Garza assists a faculty member at the Fall Faculty Showcase.
From October 28th - November 1st the city of San Antonio hosted the ScienceWriters Conference. This annual conference consists of reporters from both the National Association of Science Writers (NASW) and the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW). During the event attendees developed articles that appealed to the science research audience. The conference consisted of 14 tours and various events, two of which were hosted at UTSA, with over 15 sponsors including The Texas Biomedical Research Institute and BioBridge Global.

On October 31st, UTSA’s Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) participated in the annual ScienceWriters conference. A significant amount of science reporters were welcomed to UTSA’s Main Campus by both the Dean of the College of Sciences George Perry, Ph.D. and the Dean of the College of Engineering JoAnn Browning, Ph.D., for the “Sustainably, robotics and visualization at UTSA” tour. The tours took place between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 12:45 p.m., allowing visitors time to view the university's new wealth of solar energy resources, Bhounsule lab, and the UTSA Advanced Visualization Laboratory (VizLab).

Enterprise Research Solutions Engineer Jeremy Mann led the VizLab tour. The UTSA Vizlab allows researchers from all disciplines of art, science, and engineering to conduct simulation and visualization research to understand complex phenomena better and translate data into images on large-scale and high-resolution visualization walls or other display devices. The reporters were given a chance to view several of the resources available to the UTSA community including:

- The VizWall - VizLab’s 14.4’ by 6′ tall visualization wall.
- SHAMU -the largest HPC cluster at the university.
- NEMO- a smaller HPC cluster for the VizLab.
- Oculus Rift-2 virtual reality (VR) headsets, which use state-of-the-art displays and optics designed specifically for VR.

At the end of the tour, the science writers had the opportunity to ask questions, many of them focused on the VizWall and projecting big data. Some also displayed a high interest in the haptic device and how it could be used as a teaching tool. UTSA’s Director of Research Computing Support and Innovative Solutions Brent League stated, “Having the science writers tour our Vizlab helped expose the high technology research done at the university, getting UTSA’s name out there nationally.”
In the fall of 2016, four UTSA undergrad students from the College of Engineering were awarded the High-Performance Computing (HPC) Scholarship. The four students currently study Biomedical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering. The scholarship became effective for the students in September and provides them with the opportunity to become familiar with the HPC capabilities at UTSA and move their research to HPC information systems. The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) is collaborating with the College of Engineering to provide the students with the proper training for their scholarship.

The students obtained an account on Shamu, the largest HPC at the university, and will use the semester to get acquainted with Linux operating systems and learn how to use HPC systems for research. OIT’s RCSG has been training the students every week in the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab), giving students Linux training, overviewing the visualization capabilities of the Vizlab, and showing the students the basics of programming. The VizLab consist of several resources including:

- The VizWall - VizLab's 14.4' by 6' tall visualization wall.
- SHAMU - the largest HPC cluster at the university.
- NEMO - a smaller HPC cluster for the VizLab.
- Oculus Rift - 2 virtual reality (VR) headsets, which use state-of-the-art displays and optics designed specifically for VR.

At the end of the fall 2016 semester, the four students gave a presentation on their research accomplishments, emphasizing their familiarity with HPC. Director of Research Computing Support and Innovative Solutions Brent League elaborated on how this opportunity benefits both UTSA and OIT, stating, “this training provides more knowledge and educates students who can help spread the word on UTSA resources, train, and assist others that are new to the information systems.”
Computing Support for Researchers
Collaborating to Expand High Performance Computing for Researchers at UTSA

October 31 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Brent League, Bryan Wilson and Ernest Hernandez III

The University of Texas at San Antonio’s (UTSA) research needs have expanded greatly over the recent years. This has been due in part to the university’s efforts to achieve Tier One status. To support this, the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) is collaborating with faculty across the university to discover where enhancements in technology could support their research as well as find innovative ways to use what is already in place.

Partnering to Promote Research

The RCSG has worked in partnership with the OIT Video Production Group (VPG) to produce a video that highlights what the RCSG is designed to do and how this support can benefit the entire university. “With our new brand, Collaborate. Innovate. Succeed. OIT is looking to market itself to the university community as a people-oriented organization...and I think the best way to do that is to tell the story or stories of our people helping our UTSA clients and customers in innovative ways,” stated Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez.

The VPG regularly supports UTSA faculty to create videos that can be used as learning tools to enhance the student experience and to promote the six priorities of the UTSA 2020 Blueprint. This video effort with RCSG was an opportunity to work with departments across the university to showcase OIT support resources available to student and faculty researchers at UTSA, and dynamically communicate the message using video. Hernandez stated, “I think everything connects with OIT in one way or another, because OIT is very plugged into supporting UTSA’s mission of enabling student success and advances in research.”

Tier One Research and Technology

Technology staff supporting researchers as they use these resources is critical to developing buy-in from faculty and staff who can spread the word of available services. The RCSG provides support for faculty and student researchers and data analytics through various means including storage, Research Data Centers, and Shamu (the high compute cluster). As research and data analytics expand, high performance computing resources are needed to support researchers at UTSA.

The RCSG is continually evaluating the needs of the university. Through interaction with UTSA researchers, the group has been able to expand the conversation on technology to maintain this critical area at UTSA. They are assisting with various research projects including the use of an Electron Microscope as well as connecting a high powered telescope to the VizWall. Furthermore, they have identified areas to target in order to ensure the university is primed to support increased research data such as the need to increase network bandwidth.

Link(s): https://vimeo.com/183027633
http://hpcsupport.utsa.edu

Oculus Rift 3-D simulation.
Infrastructure Improvements for High Performance Computing Support

The RCSG collaborated with Interim Vice Provost for IT and CIO Bryan Wilson and multiple interdisciplinary faculty across campus to apply for a National Science Foundation Grant to bring a 10G connectivity, research only network, to several buildings on campus. Director of Research Computing Support and Innovative Solutions Brent League stated, “Over the years I have heard from many faculty researchers that they just didn’t have enough bandwidth coming from their lab or their office up to the Texas Advanced Computing Center in Austin or even to the research data center here on campus which runs the centrally shared High Performance Computing cluster.” Due to this the RCSG believe this improvement would benefit UTSA as a whole as it expands rather than a single disciplinary unit.

Increased collaboration and support of academic partners at UTSA applying for grants, awards, and other opportunities is one of the objectives of OIT in support of UTSA 2020 Blueprint. Discussing the experience of collaborating to apply for the grant as an institution, Associate Dean of the College of Engineering Harry Millwater Ph.D., noted, “To me that is groundbreaking.” Details from staffing, research computing facilities, and technology needs were collected and thoroughly analyzed to ensure feasibility. Dr. Millwater expressed that, “Just doing that, even if we don’t win, was a tremendous benefit I thought. We had people working from all over campus putting it together.”

For more information on High Performance Computing support at UTSA visit: Hpcsupport.utsa.edu or contact the OIT Research Computing Group at RCISG@utsa.edu.

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) was formed by a committee of faculty researchers with support from OIT to provide necessary support for UTSA researchers who are dependent on high performance computing.

The RCSG, led by Director of Research Computing Support Brent League, supports UTSA’s research community by facilitating growth, enabling productivity and innovation, maintaining and supporting the Research Data Center, offering High Performance Computing solutions and managing the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab).
The Learning Technologies team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted the 2016 Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC) national conference which convened in San Antonio for the first time. The conference ran from November 2 - 6 and was held at the Holiday Inn Riverwalk. As part of the agenda for the conference’s penultimate day, the team led more than 200 attendees on a tour of the UTSA Main Campus.

“I’ve never been to Texas at all,” said Andy Borts, classroom/event technology specialist at Westminster College in Pennsylvania. “Getting to see UTSA was awesome. I’ve found something enriching out of every session [at the conference] and the hosts have been phenomenal.”

The tour commenced with a Welcome Address from Interim Executive Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza. Afterwards, attendees from technology companies and more than 50 institutions of higher education spanning across the United States, Bermuda, Canada, Egypt and England, including Harvard Business School, Yale and Stanford Universities, were given a first-hand look at some of the technology and furniture utilized to facilitate learning at UTSA.

Some of the buildings attendees explored included the Main Building which houses the Learning Playground (MB 0.104) and the Business Building, in which the Learning Studio (BB 2.04.16) is located. The Learning Technologies team recently redesigned both of these spaces as part of OIT’s effort to increase student engagement and ultimately success. Attendees were given an opportunity to experience the technology as well as the movable and collaborative furniture that have been incorporated into these spaces.

The CCUMC conference unites various institutions of higher education and technology companies for a series of keynote presentations, interest groups and concurrent sessions focused on leveraging technology in higher education. In addition, it features a vendor showcase of current and emerging audio visual technology from leading companies. A total of 34 states were represented at the 2016 CCUMC conference.
The 2016 conference focused on the theme “Deep in the Heart of Learning,” and delved into a myriad of topics such as increasing student engagement through Active Learning Classrooms (ALCs), best practices in pedagogy, as well as ways to leverage audio visual technology to enhance learning. Keynote speakers included Associate Dean of Student Success and Instructional Innovation in the UTSA College of Science Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Ph.D. and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Remote Engineering Education at the Texas A&M University Sunay Palsole, Ph.D.

“My team and I were excited to showcase UTSA and the projects we’ve been working on with our faculty over the last year,” said Joe Tobares, director of Learning Technologies. “We’re doing great things here and it’s good to share them with our peers from across the nation to get feedback and ideas to further our efforts as we begin to rethink learning spaces on campus.”

Tobares along with his team helped coordinate and provide the audio visual and technical support for the event. “I loved the conference,” said Regina Greenwood, associate director of Instructional Media Services at the Texas A&M University. “A lot of work went into it.”

Attendees viewing the technologies and furnishings in the Learning Playground at the CCUMC Campus Tour of UTSA.
UTSA's Office of Online Learning Participates in National Distance Learning Week

The UTSA Office of Information Technology's (OIT's) Online Learning department participated in its second National Distance Learning Week (NDLW) hosted by the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) on November 7th from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. and November 8th from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. The FREE event, which was held in the UTSA Sombrilla Plaza, was designed to promote UTSA online and hybrid courses and showcase the growth of online learning during NDLW.

During NDLW, students were given an interactive survey to help improve the online and hybrid courses. Students were asked “What do you want in an online course to enhance your learning experience?” and then given a sticker to place on any of the available responses. There were different options including constructive feedback from my professor and other students and instant collaborations. The survey poll also included a suggestion box where students could write and share their ideas.

After participating in the survey, to help increase the awareness of social media, students were given the opportunity to get a FREE t-shirt by following UTSA's Online Learning on social media. During this time students were able to take pictures with Rowdy and were educated on the free hybrid and online courses offered at UTSA. The online learning table also included a Microsoft Surface used to give students a chance to view the Online Learning website.

“The event hosted by the Office of Online Learning for National Distance Learning Week was a great success! We wanted to put a face behind the courses that so many of our students take, and essentially let them know we’re here for them,” stated Christopher Cortez, multimedia specialist II. “With all the information gathered from this event, ranging from the students wants and needs, we’re sure to move forward in a progressive manner that’s aimed to please our students and faculty in the future of online education at UTSA.”

OIT’s Office of Online Learning offers many sessions and services to help increase the level of student success at UTSA. NDLW is a great time to promote online learning and increase the student awareness of online and hybrid courses offered at UTSA. Director of Online Learning Marcela Ramirez stated, “After attending our event, students can go to our website and find the course they need for next semester.”

Link(s): [http://odl.utsa.edu/online/](http://odl.utsa.edu/online/)
UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Presents at the 2016 TBUG Conference

November 10-11 | League City, TX
Presenter(s):
Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., Christopher Cortez, Mayra Collins and Vanessa Garza

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Online Learning department presented at the 2016 Texas Blackboard Users Group (TBUG) Conference from November 10-11. The annual conference, which took place in League City, Texas, is a networking opportunity for Blackboard users allowing them to collaborate and share best practices and solutions.

During the conference, members were given two presentations from OIT’s Online Learning staff. Senior Instructional Designer Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., and Instructional Development Specialist Vanessa Garza presented “Who is Afraid of Online Learning? Strategies to Lead Students to Self-efficacy and Gain Confidence in an Online Learning Environment.” The second presentation was given by Instructional Designer Mayra Collins and Multimedia Specialist II Christopher Cortez discussing “Out of the Norm: A Creative Training Course.” The presentation elaborated on methods for becoming more creative and innovative when presenting course material.

OIT’s Online Learning offers many sessions and services to help increase the level of student success at UTSA. They offer workshops, training, Blackboard support, and instructional design and development to assist in ensuring our faculty has the best tools and techniques to support themselves and their students in the classroom.
November 22
Featuring:
Greg Oliver and Jayashree Iyengar

UTSA faculty needing to complete their annual Conflict of Interest (COI) can now do so via a new website. This past summer, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s Application Development and Support (ADS) team collaborated with the UTSA Office of Research Integrity (ORI) to develop a user-friendly website that will offer faculty a sleek user interface with a modern design, which will replace the previously used system.

“The initial website was a third-party product, which eventually became too expensive to maintain and modify,” said Jayashree Iyengar, director of ADS. “The Office of Research Integrity approached us to develop a product in-house with only the features they needed in it.”

UTSA requires that faculty members annually disclose any conflicts of interest, which may potentially impact their research work and other responsibilities at UTSA. This disclosure enables the university to determine whether outside activities are compliant with the university’s policies and standards outlined in section 10.04 of the UTSA Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP).
The ADS team customized the new COI website, using the latest technologies, in an effort to provide faculty an enhanced experience when submitting their disclosures. The new website allows users to easily make amendments to previously submitted disclosure forms. Doing so eliminated the need for faculty to create entirely new disclosure forms every year, thereby reducing administrative time.

“With this new website, users can easily create new disclosures or open previous disclosures, modify a few key pieces of information and submit the changes,” explained Greg Oliver, OIT manager for ADS. “This reduces the need for users to start from scratch year after year which reduces re-work and saves time for faculty.”

UTSA faculty can also file disclosures from virtually any location as this new website is accessible on mobile devices. Its responsive web design (RWD) allows the layout of the website to adapt to the size of the screen on any device through which it is being viewed.

“One of the benefits of doing it in-house is there is no annual maintenance fee,” Oliver explained. “Also, if ORI needs future enhancements, then we’re just across the breezeway.”

![Homepage of new COI website.](image-url)
The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) Introduces New Technical Support Live Chat Service

November 28 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Ben Garcia

UTSA students, faculty and staff can now receive technical assistance remotely on any UTSA computing asset or mobile device. This is thanks to a new service called OITConnect Chat Support, which allows users to obtain real-time technical support from the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) OITConnect team.

Previously, users could only create service requests through OITConnect via email, phone, the online portal, or in-person. However, in an effort to further expand the customer support tools it offers to the UTSA community, OIT decided to offer a live chat service, which is accessible by clicking on the Live Chat icon located on the OITConnect website.

“Over time, users have requested that we provide a chat capability for support,” said Ben Garcia, director of Customer Operations and Support. “As this is also an industry trend, we felt it was the time to move forward to implement this. Our goal is not to provide chat to replace any other communication channel, but to serve as an additional channel that users can receive support through.”

Provided by a vendor called Support.com, OITConnect Chat Support enables users to communicate with OIT technicians and conveniently receive assistance from virtually any location. OIT technical support agents are able to directly access affected machines and mobile devices, in order to perform necessary repairs and software installations regardless of whether the device is connected to the UTSA network or public internet. Live technicians are readily available to assist customers during OITConnect’s hours of operation.

“This new service has the potential to benefit our community because it allows quicker visibility and access to the computing asset that’s experiencing an issue,” Garcia explained. “We are directly online, not only with the customer, but with the machine to immediately troubleshoot it during that initial interaction.”

OITConnect Chat Support will enable users to receive instant responses to help resolve any technical concerns that may arise on their devices, further reflecting OIT’s dedication to providing top-tier customer service to the university. “I find chat to be an extremely effective communications tool,” Garcia shared. “By going through chat, the conversation is captured, which allows us to have a greater, more accurate record of what the user is requesting and what work was done for future reference and to further improve our process.”

OIT chat window on OIT website.
UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Presents at the 2016 IFWE Conference

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Online Learning department presented at the 2016 International Forum for Women in eLearning (IFWE) conference, hosted by the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA), from November 30 - December 2. The conference, which took place at Hotel Contessa in San Antonio, Texas, included open discussions, a voicing of ideas, and a number of presentations involving conversations that included audience participation. IFWE recognizes the role of women leaders in eLearning and is held every two years.

During the conference, members were given two presentations from OIT’s Online Learning staff. Senior Instructional Designer Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., Director of Online Learning Marcela Ramirez, and Instructional Development Specialist Diana Amis presented “Empathy in Action to Engage in Meaningful Conversations about Digital Learning.” Amis also presented, “15 Tips When Working with New Technologies and Learning Ideas.” During the presentation she provided 15 tips on how to work with new-fangled learning techniques and/or technologies.

The IFWE conference is a great opportunity to share ideas and concerns, learn about eLearning programs and products, and gain better insight on what it takes to be a successful leader. Attendees are given an opportunity to network and establish new relationships and contacts.
Wireless Coverage Improvements
OIT Improves Wireless Coverage for the UTSA Sombrilla

December 15 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Dan Byrd

In the fall of 2016, UTSA’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) began implementing additional wireless access points to help enhance coverage of the university’s network system for students, faculty, and staff.

The wireless expansion will be utilized to provide better Internet coverage around the UTSA Sombrilla. Due to architectural limitations, UTSA currently has a limited wireless access point deployment which provides coverage to a portion of the Sombrilla. To help enhance the Wi-Fi, OIT will be placing wireless access points along the overhangs of the buildings surrounding the Sombrilla.

The access points will be installed in front of the overhangs of the McKinney Humanities (MH), Science, Multidisciplinary Studies (MS), Arts, and Main Buildings (MB), as well as the 3rd floor of the John Peace Library (JPL). During this project, the team will input holes in the cover areas to place conduit pathways in the surrounding buildings leaving no exposed wiring and only the access points viewable. This is a multiphase project that consists of:

1. Cabling
2. Powering
3. Conduit installation
4. Installing access points

As of now additional access points have been added in the JPL and the MH. Once the access points are installed they will immediately start providing enhanced wireless coverage. Director of Infrastructure Services Daniel Byrd states, “We can expect wireless coverage and performance in the Sombrilla and surrounding areas to be drastically improved upon completion of this project.”

Enhancing the Wi-Fi coverage will help benefit many students who enjoy spending time in the Sombrilla area by providing better coverage and signal strength on their wireless devices. Byrd says students can expect all access points to be implemented the spring 2017 semester.
Alexandra Roman  
Part-Time Student Assistant

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Educational Experience Film Festival (E2F2)
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Anthony Espinoza  
Interim Executive Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO

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Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative (EAB SSC)
EAB SSC Meeting
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OIT Hosts North SA Chamber of Commerce CIO Breakfast
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The Office of Online Learning Welcomes New Faculty at the “2016 OIT Meet and Greet”
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Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC)
OIT’s Learning Technologies team Hosts 2016 CCUMC Conference Campus Tour at the UTSA Main Campus
November 2 - 6, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 104 - 105

Ben Garcia  
Director of Customer & Operations Support Services

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Migration of Windows 10: Migration, Management, and Security
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North SA Chamber CIO Breakfast
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Access College and Excel Scholar Program (ACE)
First-Generation UTSA Alumna Receives Office of Information Technology, Tomas Rivera Center Laptop Award
September 7, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 81

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The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) Introduces New Technical Support Live Chat Service
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Senior Information Security Analyst

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Bradley Christianson  
Enterprise Systems Programmer

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Brent League  
Director, Research Computing Support and Innovative Solutions

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North SA Chamber E-Tech Newsletter
OIT’s Research Computing Support Group Supports University’s Tier One Mission
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OIT’s Research Computing Support Group Participates in the 2016 ScienceWriters Conference
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High Performance Computing Scholarship Award
OIT’s Research Computing Support Group Provides Students with Linux and HPC Training
October 28, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 101

Computing Support for Researchers
Collaborating to Expand High Performance Computing for Researchers at UTSA
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Bryan Wilson  
Interim Vice Provost for IT/CIO

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Chip Meadows  
Senior Information Security Analyst

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San Antonio FBI Citizens Academy
Information Security Staff Member Participates in the FBI Citizens Academy
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OIT Staff Serve as Guest Speakers for PREP Career Services
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Christopher Cortez  
Multimedia Specialist II

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UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Presents at the 2016 TBUG Conference
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Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D.  
Senior Instructional Designer

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SXSWedu Conference
OIT and Advising Staff Present Sessions at SXSWedu
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Gates Foundation hosts Kotter International Change Management Training at UTSA
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UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Hosts the Fall Faculty Showcase Presentations for Hybrid/ Online Courses
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Manager, Learning Technologies

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Edgar Madrigal
Customer Support Supervisor

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Ernest Hernandez III
Director, Video Technology

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Getting Personal
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Gerard Bustos
Video Production Manager

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Gilbert Cassiano
Senior IT Infrastructure Project Manager

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Greg Oliver
OIT Manager, Application Development and Support

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James Lee
Systems Analyst II

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James Borrego
Senior Producer

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Custom-Made UTSA Mobile App Feature Helps Prepare New Students and Families for Orientation
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Director, Learning Technologies

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Learning Studio Scheduled to Allow UTSA Community to Explore New Technologies and Resources Available to Foster Success
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Jose Carrillo
Multimedia Specialist II

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Keith Trevino
OIT Manager, Communication Infrastructure Services

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**Kevin Kjosa**  
Information Security Operations Officer

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UTSA Hosts the South Texas Regional Task-Force Cyber Table Top Exercise  
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**University of Texas Information Security Conference**  
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**Lance Pritchard**  
Senior Information Security Analyst

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**Linda Dunn**  
Director, Student Computing Services

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**Marcela Ramirez**  
Director, Online Learning

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National Distance Learning Week
UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Participates in National Distance Learning Week
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International Forum for Women in E-Learning (IFWE) Conference
UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Presents at the 2016 IFWE Conference
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Mary-Margaret Echevarria
Telecommunications Manager

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Association for College and University Technology Advancement (ACUTA)
Telecommunications and Infrastructure Collaborative Restructure
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SXSWedu Conference
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Kotter International
Gates Foundation hosts Kotter International Change Management Training at UTSA
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Association of College and University Technology Advancement (ACUTA)
Aspire to Connect
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International Sun Conference
*Game-Based Learning Strategies to Engage and Empower Millennials*
March 17 - 18, 2016 | El Paso, TX | p. 40

USDLA National Conference
*OIT Digital Learning Staff Present at USDLA National Conference*
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Innovations in Online Learning (IOL) Conference
*Office of Online Learning Hosts 12th Annual IOL Conference*
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*UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Participates in National Distance Learning Week*
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Texas Blackboard Users Group (TBUG) Conference
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Texas Distance Learning Association (TxDLA) Conference
*Digital Learning Staff Present at 19th Annual TxDLA Conference*
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Student Innovation Coalition
OIT’s Student Innovation Coalition Provides Forum for Students Feedback
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Nicole Duff
Communications Specialist

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Patrick Nolan
Instructional Development Specialist

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Pebby Garner
Information Security Specialist, OIT Technology Support

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Robert Granado
Assistant Director, Learning Technologies - Downtown Operations
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Next Generation Learning
Personalized Learning: Using Technology to Improve the Student Experience
June 22, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 63 - 64

North SA Chamber E-Tech Newsletter
OIT Research Computing Support Group Supports University’s Tier One Mission
August 15, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 78 - 79

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North SA Chamber CIO Breakfast
OIT Hosts North SA Chamber of Commerce CIO Breakfast
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American Educational Research Association (AERA) Meeting
OIT Management Participate at the 2016 AERA Annual Meeting
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Educational Experience Film Festival (E2F2)
E2F2 Film Festival Award Ceremony
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Innovations in Online Learning (IOL) Conference
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Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC)
OIT’s Learning Technologies team Hosts 2016 CCUMC Conference Campus Tour at the UTSA Main Campus
November 2 - 6, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 104 - 105

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Shared Experiences Forum
OIT Office Supports UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars
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Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab)
VizLab Renovations
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Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
Assistant Vice Provost, IT

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Association of College and University Technology Advancement
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Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative (EAB SSC)
*EAB SSC Meeting*
February 1, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 33

Data, Reform, Equity, Achievement, Movement (DREAM) Conference
*ipASS Grantee Workshop on Engagement and Communication*
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SXSWedu Conference
*OIT and Advising Staff Present Sessions at SXSWedu*
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*Gates Foundation hosts Kotter International Change Management Training at UTSA*
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*OIT Management Participate at the 2016 AERA Annual Meeting*
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American Educational Research Association (AERA) Meeting
*UTSA Faculty Offer Insight at AERA 2017 Regional Area Scholars Meeting*
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New Media Consortium Webinar
*Getting Personal*
May 24, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 55

Prefreshman Engineering Program (PREP)
*OIT Staff Serve as Guest Speakers for PREP Career Services*
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Next Generation Learning
*Personalized Learning: Using Technology to Improve the Student Experience*
June 22, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 63 - 64

Vanessa Garza
Instructional Development Specialist
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
Assistant Vice Provost, IT

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Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS)
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation iPASS Grant Convening
June 27 - 29, 2016 | Seattle, WA | p. 67 - 68

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Site Visit
OIT Hosts THECB Site Visit to Discuss Innovation, Student Success & the iPASS initiative at UTSA
August 4, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 73 - 74

Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communications (TASSCC) Conference
OIT Staff Attend the 2016 TASSCC Conference
August 7 - 10, 2016 | Galveston, TX | p. 75

Access College and Excel Scholar Program (ACE)
First-Generation UTSA Alumna Receives Office of Information Technology, Tomas Rivera Center Laptop Award
September 7, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 81

Huffington Post
What’s Working: 21st Century Advising for Today’s College Student
September 22, 2016 | San Antonio, TX | p. 84 - 85

International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP)
Assistant Vice Provost for IT Presents at 46th Annual ISEP Meeting
October 18 - 21, 2016 | New Orleans, LA | p. 95

Unifying Mobility 2016
Unifying Mobility Conference – DubLabs
October 25, 2016 | Garden Grove, CA | p. 96

EDUCAUSE
Institutional Programs for Student Success: The Next Wave, Part 1
October 25 - 28, 2016 | Anaheim, CA | p. 97

Wesley Lay
Enterprise System Programmer

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DubLabs Webinar
UTSA: Engaging Students through a Mobile First Strategy
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Zhiwei Wang
Enterprise Research Application Support Analyst

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Office of Information Technology

Education Advisory Board Student Success Collaborative (EAB SSC)
EAB SSC Training
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Research Computing Support Group

MATLAB Seminar 2016
MATLAB Seminar at UTSA Hosted by Research Computing Support Group
August 18 | San Antonio, TX | p. 80
Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed