Reflections of 2017
Collaborate – Innovate – Succeed:

In 2017, the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) engaged in myriad departmental and university-wide initiatives aimed at strengthening the research and academic pursuits of our students, faculty and staff. Through increased partnerships with other areas across the university and external entities, OIT has demonstrated its commitment to driving success through collaboration.

This collaborative approach has enabled us to expand the funding opportunities available to assist our dedicated students and faculty in conducting meritorious research initiatives. As the university strives to attain a position in the highest tier of research activity classification, OIT realizes that sustaining and enhancing a lively research culture through funding is imperative to help our university achieve this goal.

Last year also saw OIT working closely with leading software companies to help deliver robust technology infrastructure to the UTSA community. The upgrade of Ellucian Banner 8 to version 9 is an initiative to begin in early 2018, which reflects our devotion to streamlining administrative processes.

More importantly, our direct involvement with President Eighmy’s Finance and Budget Modeling Task Force and our participation in the Student Success Initiative uniquely position us to further interact with key stakeholders in an effort to help move the university forward.

Our yearly almanac offers a glimpse into the ingenuity and dedication of our staff, comprised of 137 full-time and part-time professionals, during the past year and highlights our critical contributions to ensuring the mission of the university.

Bryan Wilson
VISION

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

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 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 Campus
- Education Advisory Board’s Guide App
- OIT StudentConnect Help Desk
- Microsoft Office Pro Plus
- Upgraded PrintSpot
- DegreeWorks
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS)
- UTSA Online
- Technology Training
- Standardized Student Response System

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
- Research Computing Advisory Committee
- Faculty Sessions
- Increased Technology Training
- SharePoint Online
- Expanded Use of OITConnect Portal
- Lecture Capture Resources
- Learning Studio
- OITConnect Chat Support
- Technology Training
- Cyber Security Training
- Standardized Student Response System
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
- CYBER SECURITY TRAINING

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
HIGHLIGHTS

Quarter One

Reflections of 2017

OIT and SiViRT Center Collaborate with USAA for Data Analytics and Visualization

February 10 | San Antonio, TX

On February 10th, the UTSA Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted a tour for the United Services Automobile Association (USAA) to explore potential collaboration in the areas of data analytics and visualization. USAA was invited by the UTSA Simulation Visualization and Real-Time Predication (SiViRT) Center to initiate the collaboration effort between UTSA and USAA.

UTSA’s iPASS Team Receives Recognition at the 2017 ATD Conference

February 20 - 24 | San Francisco, CA

Assistant Vice Provost for IT and the iPASS grant Principal Investigator (PI) Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Project Coordinator and iPASS grant Project Lead Rosalind Ong along with Executive Director of Advising Barbara Smith and Director of Advising Sylvia Mansour attended the iPASS Grantee Convening. The event was hosted by Achieving the Dream as part of the 2017 DREAM Conference.

During the event, the UTSA iPASS team presented two posters that were recognized by the convening several times throughout the event. Both Dr. Kenon and Ong received accolades and tokens for their work presented.
UTSA Faculty and Staff Share Insight at the SXSWedu 2017 Conference

March 6 - 9 | Austin, TX

Faculty and staff from the UTSA Institute for P-20 Initiatives, the Office of Information Technology, the Graduate School and the Department of Kinesiology, Health and Nutrition, had the remarkable opportunity to represent the university at this year’s SXSWedu conference. The internationally-recognized conference was held in Austin, Texas from March 6th-9th.

The UTSA Office of Information Technology Welcomes Workplace Learning Expert at a Lunch Meet and Greet

March 27 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted a Lunch Meet and Greet on Monday, March 27, 2017 to welcome Workplace Learning Expert Dr. Donald H. Taylor. The invitation-only event was open to UTSA staff involved in learning and development. It was held in the OIT Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16B).

The informative gathering enabled attendees to gain insights on the Global Workplace Learning Handbook, an OIT venture for which Dr. Taylor serves as an editorial board member.

UTSA’s Research Computing Support Group Enhances the Shared High Performance Computing Cluster

March 31 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) provides computing, storage, and visualization resources to all UTSA faculty and students. UTSA has many research applications available to all majors including statistics, data analysis, molecular modeling, scientific and engineering simulation and visualization. In fall 2017, UTSA students, faculty, and staff will be welcomed with a newly improved Shamu.

This enhancement will benefit the university by providing better data transfer rates as well as increased disk performance and capacity.

Office of Online Learning Presents at 20th Annual TxDLA Conference

March 28 - 31 | Galveston, TX

UTSA’s Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Online Learning (OL) department presented at the 20th Annual 2017 Texas Distance Learning Association Conference (TxDLA). The conference took place at the Moody Gardens Hotel in Galveston, Texas from March 28-31. In support of this year’s theme, “The Spirit of Adventure,” the conference featured a variety of subjects and activities to help encourage members to push beyond the familiar.

During the conference, members were given a presentation from OIT’s Instructional Designer, Melissa Padalecki. Padalecki presented, “Fast Track Design for Online Courses.” The presentation elaborated on a consultation process used to assist faculty tasked with preparing Online courses in a uniquely short frame.
HIGHLIGHTS
Quarter Two

Reflections of 2017

OIT Collaborates with the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars
April 5 | San Antonio, TX

During spring 2017, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Video Production Group (VPG) and Customer Relations and Communications (CRC) team collaborated with the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars (ADTS). ADTS was established in 2012 and is made up of over 30 UTSA faculty members who symbolize excellence in teaching. Each semester ADTS hosts a Shared Experiences Forum allowing members to share their best teaching and learning practices with other UTSA faculty.

OIT Staff Represents UTSA at the 2017 InnoTech Conference
April 12-13 | San Antonio, TX

UTSA’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff members represented the university at the 2017 annual InnoTech Conference. The conference took place from April 12-13 at the Norris Conference Center in San Antonio, Texas.

The Inno Tech Conference presents an opportunity for IT staff to collaborate and discuss current technology issues and successful techniques used in their IT work environment. At the event, guests are given the opportunity to attend sessions, a vendor fair, and special events. Some of the session topics included mobility, IT security, IT leadership, and business intelligence/analytics.
OIT Hosts 2017 Spring Tech Conference
April 20 | San Antonio, TX

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) held the OIT 2017 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. Throughout the event, OIT staff members presented sharing insight on different services and products. Guest were treated to a complimentary lunch during a keynote presentation by Dr. Enrique Alemán Jr.

UTSA Office of Information Technology awards grants to six UTSA colleges to support student success initiatives
May 26 | San Antonio, TX

Six University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) colleges have been awarded grants totaling $125,000 from the UTSA Office of Information Technology Academic Support Solutions Fund, formerly the Technology Fund. The awards will assist each college in the implementation of projects aimed at contributing to student success.
OIT Supports Student Success and Academic Advising Through the iPASS Grant

July 12 | San Antonio, TX

UTSA Executive Director of Academic Advising Barbara Smith, along with Director of Academic Advising Jackie Loden and Academic Advisor II Miranda Swain presented at the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) webinar held July 12, 2017. The webinar, which is available nationally, focused on the “Advisor Voice” and featured UTSA. Assistant Vice Provost for IT and iPASS Grant Principal Investigator Vanessa Hammel Kenon, Ed.D., along with Project Coordinator and iPASS Lead Rosalind Ong assisted in organizing the event. Network Technician Vince Rivera served as technology facilitator to ensure the event ran smoothly.

The Office of Information Technology Kicks Off the New Year at UTSA Roadrunner Days

August 22 | San Antonio, TX

New and returning students kicked-off the new academic year with UTSA Roadrunner Days. Roadrunner Days is a 10-day Roadrunner Nation festivity on both the Main and Downtown campuses filled with exciting and important events designed to help students get involved. During this time, students are educated on UTSA, introduced to valuable student resources and entertained with great engaging events.

On August 22, UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team participated at the “President’s BBQ on the Lawn” on the Main Campus. The event took place from 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. and provided free food and live entertainment.

UTSA Faculty and Staff Exchange Insights with Peer Institutions about Student Success

September 25 - 26 | San Antonio, TX

Faculty and staff from various departments and offices across the University of Texas at San Antonio convened in the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16) from September 25-26 to exchange insights with peer institutions about best practices and technology initiatives to foster student success.

The convening, which was facilitated by OIT, enabled stakeholders from Academic Advising, University College, the Tomas Rivera Center, the First-Year Experience Program, the College of Liberal and Fine Arts and the College of Education and Human Development to engage in a group viewing of a two-day student success webinar hosted by EDUCAUSE.

UTSA Students Share Feedback on Campus Technology at the Fall 2017 OIT Student Innovation Coalition

September 26 | San Antonio, TX

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team hosted the fall 2017 OIT Student Innovation Coalition on Tuesday, September 26 from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. More than 70 students, faculty, and staff attended this year’s event. Attendees were treated to lunch while hearing presentations on campus technology from various areas of OIT as well as Student Affairs. The event was facilitated by Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong and Communications Specialist Danicia Steele.
UTSA Interim CIO Leads Presentation on Moving DegreeWorks and Banner to the Cloud to Drive Student Success

October 18 | San Antonio, TX

Bryan Wilson, interim chief information officer and vice provost of Information Technology at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) served as the guest speaker for a CIO Roundtable event on October 18 at UTSA. Ellucian, a leader in higher education student success software and the vendor for DegreeWorks, hosted the event, which united executives from notable institutions across the U.S. to address the theme “Implementing Cloud Solutions.”

UTSA Community Invited On Board Destination Dell Technology Tour Bus

October 19 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA community was invited to join the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) in partnership with the Campus Technology Store and Dell on board the Destination Dell Technology Tour bus near the Sombrilla Plaza on the UTSA Main Campus on Thursday, October 19th from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The tour bus provides students, faculty and staff with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with some of the latest technologies designed to increase collaboration and productivity.
Shamu Helps UTSA Faculty, Staff and Students Accelerate Research Projects

Since its latest update in summer 2017, UTSA’s centrally shared high-performance computing (HPC) cluster Shamu, has helped a significant amount of faculty, staff, and students accelerate the completion of their research projects. The update resulted in an enhancement that has benefitted users with better data transfer rates, and increased disk performance and capacity.

Throughout fall 2017, Shamu has improved the performance level of the both the Bexar County Story Map and Password Cracking projects.

Multiple OIT Staff Collaborate with the UTSA College of Business and the San Antonio Zoo

During the fall 2017 semester, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Video Production Group (VPG) and Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) collaborated with Professor in Practice, in the College of Business (COB) Thomas Cannon J.D. Dr. Cannon is currently teaching Destination Marketing, one of the UTSA COB Marketing Sports, Event, and Tourism Management courses (SET). The purpose of this course is to show students how they can develop a successful marketing plan and promote a destination or attraction (i.e. Country, State, and City), in this case, the COB is working with the San Antonio Zoo.

Engaging the Institution in Cyber Security

As higher education institutions, universities are in a unique position. More than reporting and informing our community following breaches, we have the ability and duty to provide resources to aid in cultivating awareness of threats to reduce cybercrime. Cybercrime is a growing threat across the nation. Higher education institutions are increasingly targeted by cyber criminals to gain access to not only institutional information but also that of the students, faculty, and staff, which can compromise our institution.

Professional Development and Student Success: A Culture of Learning and Engagement

Opportunities for professional development along with memberships to professional organizations are critical as institutions continue to transform to meet the needs of a diversifying student population. Participating in development opportunities such as conferences, and attending presentation and/or presenting are critical to sharing best practices to help advance student success.
By the summer of 2017, digital signage players, which are used with monitors to display announcements, promotional material and other informational content to the UTSA community, will be upgraded on the Main, Downtown and Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) Campuses. This upgrade is thanks to an initiative led by the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Learning Technologies team to enhance the viewing experience for the UTSA community.

To execute this project, the team will transition from the existing software used in the boards called Scala, to a more user-friendly and affordable cloud-based solution known as Screenly.

“We are replacing old, more expensive and out of service video players,” said Johnny Melendez, IT project manager. “The upgraded digital signage will have a user-friendly interface console and will allow us to better support our customers.”

This upgraded platform will enable various UTSA departments to easily manage and display desired content for UTSA students, faculty and staff. Each department will be provided the necessary hardware at no cost during the initial deployment.

“We expect that this upgrade will encourage the departments to keep their information up-to-date,” Melendez shared. “This, in turn, will keep the UTSA community better informed.”

Once implemented, the Screenly software will run on a low-cost credit-card-sized single-board computing device called Raspberry Pi. All digital signage monitors will then use the Raspberry Pi to display images, videos, and web pages.

Although the new software will have a simple user interface, the Learning Technologies team plans to offer FREE training to UTSA faculty and staff to ensure that it is accessible to all potential users. In addition, the team hopes the optional training will generate increased interest in and usage of the new system.

“This is a great communication medium and service for the UTSA community,” Melendez added. “It is always exciting to work on any project that improves and enhances the services offered to our campus, especially when it will reduce the cost of operation for the departments and make it easier for the staff to use and maintain.”
OIT Participates in the North San Antonio Chamber CIO Breakfast

January 26 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Danicia Steele, Ernest Hernandez III, Gerard Bustos, James Borrego and Rosalind Ong

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Video Production Group (VPG) and Customer Relations and Communications (CRC) team, participated in the North San Antonio Chamber CIO Breakfast. The event took place on January 26 from 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. at the San Antonio Petroleum Club. The North San Antonio Chamber CIO Breakfast presents an opportunity for IT staff to collaborate and discuss current technology issues and successful techniques used in their IT work environment. Guests were treated to a breakfast buffet and refreshments while they discussed the different challenges of managing an IT staff.

During the event, Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III, Video Production Manager Gerard Bustos and Senior Producer James Borrego interviewed participants for the North San Antonio Chamber CIO Panel video while Communications Specialist Danicia Steele and Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong assisted the team during the video shoot. OIT interviewed representatives from companies including ENTRUST, VIA, San Antonio Federal Credit Union as well as UTSA.

At the video shoot, the participants shared their thoughts on the benefits of attending the CIO Breakfast. Members were also asked to share how they position their business strategy to prepare for competitive innovation now and in the near future. Once completed, the video will be presented during the North San Antonio Chamber CIO Panel luncheon as part of the InnoTech Conference in April.

OIT Collaborates with University Communications and Marketing to Redesign ROTC Battalion Website

January 30 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Greg Oliver

The UTSA Army Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROT) website now has a new look. The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s Application Development and Support (ADS) team recently collaborated with University Communications and Marketing to revamp the previous website by furnishing it with a visually appealing interface and modern features.

“The UTSA Army ROTC wanted to upgrade their website to allow different staff members the flexibility to control the site as needed,” said Greg Oliver, manager of ADS.

This led ADS to explore the option of redesigning the ROTC website using Word Press, a user-friendly content management system (CMS). CMS enables users to upload and modify website content easily.

“When the development was complete, ADS then handed the website over to University Communications and Marketing as that is one of their areas of expertise,” Oliver explained. “They have been very helpful and spectacular.”

The Roadrunner Battalion website now features a responsive web design (RWD), allowing it to adapt to the size of any screen on which it is displayed. In addition, its integration with the popular photo-sharing platform Flickr enables users to easily view photos from various Army ROTC events on the site’s homepage.

The redesigned site also features a Cadet Portal which allows ROTC cadets from neighboring institutions, such as Texas A&M University, and the Alamo Colleges (San Antonio College, Northwest Vista and Palo Alto College) access to training and events information in a central location. Cadets can also virtually meet and learn about the current Army ROTC cadre and staff, as well as keep up-to-date on Army ROTC information including news, events and scholarships.

“It’s much more than a professional website,” said Joshua Adams, UTSA Army ROTC MSIII Cadet. “It really encompasses what our program is all about.”

The UTSA Army ROTC program offers electives in the field of Military Science coupled with leadership training.
In spring of 2017, UTSA students can look forward to a new virtual reality headset located in the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab). Robert “Lyle” Hood Ph.D., a faculty member of Mechanical Engineering, the UTSA College of Engineering (COE), purchased an HTC Vive to donate to the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG).

The HTC Vive is a virtual reality headset developed by HTC and Valve Corporation. According to VR Hardware, “the headset is designed to utilize ‘room scale’ technology to turn a room into 3D space via sensors, with the virtual world allowing the user to navigate naturally, with the ability to walk around and use motion tracked handheld controllers to vividly manipulate objects, interact with precision, communicate and experience immersive environments.”

Director of Research Computing Support Brent League elaborated on how important it is that students take advantage of this educational tool. Different educational applications will be available, allowing students to study the human body. Students will be able to view the inside of the human body and see how blood cells function. Other virtual reality apps allow students to study geography with Google Earth, view real life images for art majors, and much more.

The RCSG is working to ensure the technology resources available are beneficial to all students and are used as teaching tools to create collaborative learning methods for all majors. The technology and resources are available at no additional cost to the UTSA community and are also open to the non-UTSA community. There are several other resources available through the VizLab 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.
2016 was filled with opportunities for transformation for advising, involvement from faculty, and increased support for students. We wanted to take some time to reflect on our progress at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and review our vision for the future. During our journey on the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we have achieved tremendous successes and uncovered great opportunities.

From the initial planning stages to going full steam on implementation, we’ve noticed the positive impact that iPASS-related changes have made in our university culture. It wouldn’t have been possible without deliberate efforts to include various stakeholder groups, which allowed us to secure valuable feedback and support along the way.

Advising Team Prepares for Change

Back in spring 2016, UTSA began its Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative (EAB/SSC) kickoff. In recognition of the fact that communication and involvement of end-users is a critical component of buy-in and adoption, several different measures were taken to help with anticipated changes. Change can be difficult with digital disruption; however, it’s often necessary in order to make progress.

Starting with the initial IPAS grant, the UTSA advising culture has changed dramatically over the past few years. This new culture has led to a greater amount of initial EAB/SSC training for advisors. There is now a greater message and culture that welcomes change for improvement and a continuous message that technology-driven advising tools provide benefits not only to advisors, but students as well. Helping our advisors to be more efficient in the administrative process has resulted in stronger relationships built during advising sessions.

To garner excitement about the upcoming transition to EAB/SSC from the previous advising system, initial training was held early in the semester. Training continued throughout the spring and summer to ensure that advisors were comfortable with and knowledgeable about how to use the advising tool to its fullest capacity. Also during this time, UTSA’s EAB/SSC leadership team selected advising staff members to pilot and test the tool prior to its release. To ensure the transition went smoothly and to offer additional support as the semester continued, more advising committees were added to test. In late summer, EAB/SSC-Campus went live to advisors.

Meanwhile, the UTSA iPASS program was recognized for its innovation and support of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (THECB) 60x30 TX—a plan that aims to increase graduation rates and have 60% of Texans ages 24-34 obtain a college credential by 2030. The transition from previous advising tools to a more comprehensive tool led to positive impact, and the tool will continue to grow as more components are added over the next year.
Targeting Students to Increase Buy-In for DegreeWorks

One of the focuses of our work in 2016 involved expanding communication to students. Like many institutions, UTSA consistently seeks to implement the most beneficial products for our students. A significant amount of resources are committed to the technology implementation process, and while we rejoice when we launch a new product or service, in reality this is just the beginning of our work.

Implementation has several components, and we believe communication for adoption is the most essential. There are several students serving on our iPASS committee who helped us engage from a student perspective as we crafted our marketing plans. We focused on two tools: DegreeWorks and the UTSA Mobile App. To increase student usage, DegreeWorks was relaunched in the fall of 2016.

Also during the fall semester, DegreeWorks information sessions were held and integrated into student-focused events such as the Student Innovation Coalition, a forum to gather student feedback on technology at the university. Marketing around campus was increased through elevator posters, banners, digital boards, and videos on the student information portal. OIT Customer Relations and Communications staff also hosted biweekly information tables to discuss DegreeWorks with students. Plus, there was swag: students who either met with an advisor and locked in their degree plans or actively used the product were provided a free DegreeWorks shirt.

Our Vision for 2017

In this new year, we have plans to add products and services that will aid in retaining and helping students to stay on track toward graduation, as well as continue to market these products and services to students. This will begin with the launch of EAB/SSC-Campus student tools. Scheduling appointments with an advisor can seem cumbersome to some students; however, we believe that providing them with access to a portal to view available advising appointments and schedule appointments at their convenience will empower them to be more proactive.

Marketing for EAB/SSC-Campus and UTSA’s branding of the platform will begin in the spring. Increasing awareness and understanding of this product and encouraging students to ask questions and meet with their advisors will be a key goal for 2017. In 2016, we promoted the UTSA Mobile App, a component which will be essential as we integrate DegreeWorks and EAB/SSC-Campus GUIDE this year. The UTSA Mobile App is very popular with students and we’ve seen a steady increase in downloads and app activity. We anticipate that students will be excited to see more tools and understanding of this product and encouraging students to ask questions and meet with their advisors will be a key goal for 2017.

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On February 10th, the UTSA Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted a tour for the United Services Automobile Association (USAA) to explore potential collaboration in the areas of data analytics and visualization. USAA was invited by the UTSA Simulation Visualization and Real-Time Predication (SiViRT) Center to initiate the collaboration effort between UTSA and USAA. The tour involved Vice President of Enterprise Data & Analytics at USAA Office Michael Kozub along with eight other USAA high-level executives.

At the beginning of the tour, UTSA’s Director of Research Computing Support Brent League, along with Center Director and Professor of UTSA’s SiViRT Yusheng Feng Ph.D., and UTSA Associate Professor of Computer Science John Quarles Ph.D., welcomed the distinguished guests from USAA. The event was held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., allowing visitors time to view the university’s new wealth of solar energy resources and the UTSA Advanced Visualization Laboratory (VizLab).

Dr. Feng led the tour with Enterprise Research Application Support Analyst Zhiwei Wang. Participants were introduced to both the SiViRT Center and VizLab, which were initially funded by the National Science Foundation. USAA visitors were educated on the history and expertise of SiViRT Center faculty as well as its research capabilities to the USAA visitors. Dr. Feng also elaborated that 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.

During the tour, participants were given a first-hand experience with the VizLab resources available to the UTSA community to see how the resources could help them in their current business environment at USAA. One of the participants stated, “The VizWall would contribute to making communication and presentations easier. They also indicated how they would use the VizWall to “help explore data and display metrics for evaluating the performance of USAA.”

At the end of the tour, the USAA participants had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss their needs in the data analytics and visualization. Many of their questions focused on the VizWall and developing computer models of decision support systems as well as methods and tools for predicting future trends using big data. Dr. Feng expressed interests not only in collaborative research but also internship opportunities for UTSA students. To proceed with the partnership, Christina Hollman, Assistant Vice President at USAA and point of contact to UTSA, will arrange a return visit for SiViRT faculty shortly.

The tour introduced them to several UTSA resources including:

- The VizWall - VizLab’s 14.4’ by 6’ large visualization wall with high resolution up to almost 200 million pixels (Nearly 100 times more clarity than commonly used household television sets).
- SHAMU - the largest HPC cluster at the university.
- NEMO - a fast GPU dominated cluster empowers the VizWall.
- Oculus Rift - virtual reality (VR) headsets, which use state-of-the-art displays and optics designed specifically for VR.
- HTC Vive - the latest augmented virtual reality device.
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff members, Assistant Vice Provost for IT and the iPASS grant Principal Investigator (PI) Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Project Coordinator and iPASS grant Project Lead Rosalind Ong along with Executive Director of Advising Barbara Smith and Director of Advising Sylvia Mansour attended the iPASS Grantee Convening. The event was hosted by Achieving the Dream (ATD) on February 20-22 as part of the 2017 DREAM Conference which ran from February 21-24 in San Francisco, California. Author Stephen M.R. Covey delivered the plenary luncheon presentation entitled “The Power of Trust.”

The iPASS (Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success) Convening brought together iPASS grantees from across the nation to share ideas and provided time for each institution to have teamwork sessions and map how their project will transform the advising structure, process, and attitudes. Also, several vendors were on hand to discuss their products that support iPASS success.

The UTSA iPASS project has aided the implementation of DegreeWorks & the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus) to improve the student pathway to graduation. A major focus of the project is serving and marketing to the students as well as empowering them by ensuring information is accessible and delivery is streamlined through mobile apps. The iPASS project supports UTSA’s student success initiatives such as the UTSA Coordinated and Linked Approach to Student Success (CLASS).

UTSA presented at two poster sessions, one during the iPASS Grantee Convening Showcase Reception on Monday, February 20 and the other at the DREAM Conference Integrated Student Support Networking Reception held on Thursday, February 23. The team shared information on the UTSA iPASS project including strategies for adoption and iPASS tools (DegreeWorks and SSC-Campus).

The UTSA iPASS project was recognized by the convening several times throughout the event, and both Dr. Kenon and Ong received accolades and tokens for their work presented. Dr. Kenon received accolades and tokens for her networking and analysis with the Georgia State team on getting DegreeWorks to add a module that would seamlessly support degree plans between the university’s community college partners.

UTSA is one of 26 higher education institutions selected for the iPASS grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant is a collaboration of the Office of Provost, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and the Office of Information Technology at UTSA.
The Office of Information Technology’s Online Learning (OL) department is partnering with the UTSA College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) and the Graduate School to offer three new online graduate certificate programs. These programs, which were recently approved, will be available in Health, Applied Health Research, and Community Nutrition in the fall of 2017.

“The Office of Online Learning wanted to participate in the design and development of three certificate programs to make it flexible for non-traditional students in public health who might be working full-time,” said Marcela Ramirez, director of Online Learning. “These certificates will cater to students who are in need of a flexible online format to continue their professional development studies in community and public health.”

Currently, UTSA is the only institution in San Antonio to offer community-based graduate certificate programs in these fields in an online format. Student and faculty feedback obtained from these courses plays a crucial role in contributing to how OL is designing these virtual courses.

Interested candidates who are not currently enrolled at the university will need to seek admission as a ‘Special Graduate’ student. Once admitted, students must obtain a form from Erica Sosa, Ph.D., associate professor of Kinesiology, Health, and Nutrition, seeking permission to enter and complete the specified certificate program.

“The new graduate certificate programs in Health, Applied Health Research and Community Nutrition will support UTSA’s Tier One mission to become a “Very High Research” institution by allowing us to offer the expertise of talented research-focused faculty in three very high demand fields to students around the world,” said Theodorea Berry, Ed.D., associate dean of Academic Affairs and director of Recruitment and Engagement of the Graduate School. “Offering these three programs in an online delivery format expands the visibility of such gifted and dedicated faculty who provide an education within a global perspective.”

Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia was a panelist at the February convening of the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Monthly CIO Breakfast Technology Series. The panel presentation entitled, “The Softer Side of IT – Cultivating Hard-to-Find Soft Skills in Today’s IT Workforce,” was moderated by Garcia along with the following panelists:

- Crystal Gill, Business Development Lead with Experis.
- Steve Young, Vice President of IT at VIA.
- David Smith, Director of Service Delivery at Catapult Systems.

The panel session presented a discussion on the importance and need for greater soft skills within an organization’s employee workforce, how IT leaders have a critical role in the promoting and hiring of employees with such soft skills, and how to drive a culture shift within an organization promoting “The Softer Side of IT.”

“As an IT organization, we are providing a customer-centric approach to the offering of IT services,” said Garcia.

The presentation also provided attendees with the following takeaways on how to advance key communication and collaboration skills within the IT workforce:

1. Understand how communication and collaboration are important to achieving your business goals.
2. Develop a culture of collaboration with the organization.
3. Elevate the leaders’ communication and collaboration skills.
4. Understand the organization’s communication and collaboration needs.
5. Take action by assessing and developing communication skills within the IT workforce.
The Enterprise Managed Customer Solutions (EMCS) and Learning Technologies (LT) teams of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) are set to upgrade the operating system on all podium and general-purpose classroom computers on the Main and Downtown Campuses in May 2017. To perform this upgrade, the teams will deploy the Microsoft operating system Windows 10 on the computers.

"OIT wants the computers to be on the most updated, secure operating system whenever possible," said Joe Tobares, director of Learning Technologies. "This is why we decided to move to Windows 10. Every year we do an image refresh, and we moved the timeframe for this project to May, when there are very few classes occurring."

Deploying this new operating system will be beneficial for the UTSA community as it will help foster increased productivity, collaboration, and innovation amongst users. The EMCS and LT teams, therefore, plan to roll out this new operating system to the UTSA community prior to the start of the summer semester.

"This upgrade will allow OIT to give UTSA faculty access to the latest software that they can use in their classes," Tobares continued. "Also, it will keep our students competitive and up-to-date as we begin to deploy this operating system to other places on campus."

The EMCS team is responsible for software configurations, software licensing and assisting with managing the computers at UTSA. Along with upgrading the operating system on the podium and general-purpose computers, the team also creates special podium images for classroom computers used by the entire UTSA community.

All general purpose classroom computers have now been upgraded to Windows 10.

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Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Director of Application Development and Support (ADS) Jayashree Iyengar presented a webinar hosted by DubLabs on March 1. Titled "Collaborative! Innovative! Successful! UTSA’s Mobile Journey," the informative webinar allowed Dr. Kenon and Iyengar to provide attendees a closer look at the UTSA Mobile App.

During the webinar, Dr. Kenon and Iyengar discussed how the creation of the UTSA Mobile App helps support the university’s mobile-first strategy. In addition, they explored various marketing campaign initiatives such as elevator posters and videos which have been implemented by the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) in an effort to raise students’ awareness and usage of the app.

The UTSA Mobile App was developed by the ADS team in partnership with its vendor DubLabs. The app is available at no cost to the UTSA community. It comprises an array of features which allow students to:

1. Pay tuition
2. View campus dining hours and locations
3. Buy textbooks
4. View grades and more!

Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D. Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
The Learning Technologies team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted a campus technology tour led by Panasonic on March 3. The event was held in the OIT Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16B) from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and was open to UTSA faculty and staff.

“The purpose of this event was mostly to allow attendees to familiarize themselves with the product lines that Panasonic offers for audio/visual (AV) technology in teaching spaces and to meet our local Panasonic representative in person,” said Robert Granado, assistant director of Learning Technologies. “It also provided attendees an opportunity to network with other organizations looking for similar AV technology solutions in their teaching and learning spaces.”

During the tour, representatives from Panasonic provided hands-on demos of a variety of technologies designed to support classrooms, digital signage, auditoriums and lecture halls and lecture capturing. These innovative technologies included:

- a 65” interactive LED display whiteboard
- new digital signage monitors
- projectors
- cameras

Attendees gained insights on how these technologies could be implemented and leveraged in their respective departments and at events to meet their AV technology needs. Additionally, attendees were able to learn first-hand how OIT standardizes on AV technologies, such as projectors, which are deployed in various classrooms.

The first of its kind for Panasonic, this year’s technology tour enables representatives to introduce higher education institutions like UTSA, which utilize Panasonic technology, to their latest projectors and flat panel displays. Some other campuses where the tour has been held include UT-Austin, the University of Houston Clear Lake, and Baylor University.

In addition, the tour allows representatives to roll out its products to institutions that are not currently Panasonic customers in an effort to expand its reach.

“The event at UTSA was fantastic,” said Josh Rountree, senior partner sales manager of Panasonic. “The turnout was great, and we appreciate the support we always get from UTSA.”
UTSA Faculty and Staff Share Insight at the SXSWedu 2017 Conference

March 6 - 9 | Austin, TX
Panelist:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
Author(s):
Nicole Duff

Faculty and staff from the UTSA Institute for P-20 Initiatives, the Office of Information Technology, the Graduate School and the Department of Kinesiology, Health and Nutrition, had the remarkable opportunity to represent the university at this year’s SXSWedu conference. The internationally-recognized conference was held in Austin, Texas from March 6th-9th.

Darrell Balderama, director of Retention Programs and Theodorea Berry, Ed.D., associate dean of Academic Affairs and director of Recruitment and Engagement, along with Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., assistant vice provost for IT, were selected to serve as speakers at the education conference. Prior to their selection, the UTSA team submitted proposals to the SXSWedu PanelPicker, a worldwide platform which allows members of the SXSWedu community to suggest engaging and innovative content for presentations, panels, summits, etc. to be featured at an upcoming convening.

Once submitted, proposals undergo a two-fold voting process which first entails crowdsourcing from the public, and then from SXSW staff and its Advisory Board. The UTSA team’s proposals were among 240+ to be accepted out of the 1,300 submitted for this year’s event.

Balderama and Dr. Berry’s panel entitled “Making the Transition: 1st Gen. to Graduate School,” explored research on various initiatives employed at higher education institutions to support underserved students in their graduate school pursuits. During the discussion, the UTSA duo discussed programs such as the TRIO Programs and the P-20 initiatives which are specially designed to provide students access to higher education.

Their session was part of a summit organized by Langston Clark, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology, Health and Nutrition, which also included two other panel presentations moderated by representatives from other institutions.

Dr. Kenon served as a panelist for two sessions in which she presented research. The first was a special session entitled “Partnership and Collaboration-Institutional Perspectives of Scale.” The second session enabled her to deeply delve into innovative research regarding the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant and its effects in fostering student success and enhancing the role of advisors, faculty and staff.

She discussed different advising technologies including the degree auditing tool DegreeWorks and the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB’s) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus), which have been implemented in part by the support of this grant.

“I’m excited to see the great presence of UTSA faculty and staff presenting this year,” said Dr. Kenon. “They have represented UTSA so well.”

SXSWedu unites students and educational professionals from across the United States annually for a series of keynote addresses, summits, workshops, and discussions focused on innovation in learning.
The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Customer Relations and Communications team hosted a UTSA site-visit with Achieving the Dream (ATD) and Strategic Partnership Advisor Leon Hill. The site-visit also involved special guest from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Director of Innovation Tracey Armstrong, and the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) committee comprised of students, faculty, staff, and university leaders.

The visit was held in the OIT Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16) on March 15 & 16 and was facilitated by Assistant Vice Provost for IT and iPASS Project Principal Investigator (PI) Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

The visit was an opportunity to discuss the progress UTSA has made on advising reform and how the iPASS grant project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), supports those efforts.

UTSA was one of 26 higher education institutions nationwide selected for the iPASS grant. The grant is a collaboration of the Office of the Provost, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and OIT at UTSA. The work on this project supports goals for the THECB 60x30 TX, the UT System Student Success, the UTSA Blueprint, the CLASS (Coordinated and Linked Approach to Student Success) initiative, and the OIT mission. The iPASS project involves the introduction of several advising tools including the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB’s) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus), DegreeWorks, and mobile components.

**IPASS Project Refinement**

As part of the grant, UTSA receives support from the BMFG and its partners which include ATD, EDUCAUSE, rPK Group, and Coffey Consulting. Hill serves as a coach for the UTSA iPASS project and has provided consistent feedback over the three-year grant and also visits annually to meet with the team.

During the visit, Hill led the iPASS committee members through the process of identifying how far UTSA’s work toward improving the academic advising process and institutional culture at UTSA has come, changes encountered, and opportunities for growth.

**Project Successes and Challenges**

Dr. Kenon discussed the importance of communication including marketing and training, for successful implementation. OIT has supported advising reform at UTSA by assisting with these efforts by marketing the tools through various mediums including videos, elevator posters, information sessions, and tabling.

Executive Director of Advising Barbara Smith and Director of Advising Sylvia Mansour also shared successes including the increased usage of DegreeWorks by students. As of spring 2017, 80% of eligible students have locked degree plans to help them stay on-track toward graduation, an increase of 66% from spring 2016.

**Next Steps for Student Success at UTSA**

Over the next year, the iPASS team will focus on adding mobile components to the tools available to students at UTSA. The EAB’S GUIDE App will be piloted to freshmen later this year and both GUIDE and DegreeWorks components will be integrated into the UTSA Mobile App. To support this, the iPASS core team will collaborate, include students, and celebrate successes (wins) throughout the year.

Advising at UTSA has had many improvements, and although technology tools like SSC-Campus and DegreeWorks played a large part, the adoption and success of advising reform can be attributed to the advisors at UTSA who work directly with students to help them reach their academic goals. Mansour stated, “With technology, we must not forget that we are human beings. None of this works without the advisors – we need to celebrate with them.”
The UTSA Office of Information Technology Welcomes Workplace Learning Expert at a Lunch Meet and Greet

March 27 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Bryan Wilson, Nicole Duff, Rosalind Ong and Vanessa Hammller Kenon, Ed.D.

The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted a Lunch Meet and Greet on March 27, to welcome Workplace Learning Expert Dr. Donald H. Taylor. The invitation-only event was open to UTSA staff involved in learning and development. It was held in the OIT Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16B) from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

The informative gathering enabled attendees to gain insights on the Global Workplace Learning Handbook, an OIT venture for which Dr. Taylor serves as an editorial board member. Dr. Taylor, who was the event’s guest speaker, is the Chairman of the Learning and Performance Institute which is based in the United Kingdom and is recognized as one of the leaders in global workplace learning. A renowned commentator, organizer, consultant and speaker on workplace learning, Dr. Taylor holds an honorary doctorate from Middlesex University.

CIO and Interim Vice Provost of IT Bryan Wilson welcomed attendees. Following his address, Assistant Vice Provost of IT Vanessa Hammller Kenon, Ed.D., who is also one of the handbook’s co-editors, shared information regarding its background and current progress. Dr. Kenon also explored some of the collaborative research work conducted by UTSA students and student-workers on this project. Communications Specialist Nicole Duff then introduced the guest speaker.

During his presentation, Dr. Taylor engaged in a discussion with attendees about new trends in the learning and development field as well as the ongoing need for human capital. In addition, he explored his role in helping promote the book globally as well as UTSA’s role in working on this project.

After his address, Dr. Taylor was presented with a token of appreciation by Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong. The event culminated in a brief Q&A session.

“It was an honor to have such a global leader in the field of workplace learning join us,” said Dr. Kenon. “It was great to discuss the importance of the future of workplace learning.”

The Global Workplace Learning Handbook is set to be published by the internationally-renowned Wiley Publishing in the fall of 2019. Sunay Palsole, Ph.D., assistant vice chancellor for Remote Engineering Education at the Texas A&M University System is also a co-editor of this handbook.

The handbook will focus on the intricacies of workplace learning and will contain chapters from over 30 scholars and think tanks from organizations and institutions across the U.S. and around the world including the World Bank, the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) and Middlesex University.

Attendees listen attentively to Vanessa Hammller Kenon, Ed.D., as she shares historical insights about the handbook.

Dr. Donald Taylor and attendees at the lunch Meet and Greet event hosted in the OIT Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16B).
Office of Online Learning Presents at 20th Annual TxDLA Conference

March 28-31| Galveston, TX
Presenter(s):
Melissa Padalecki

UTSA’s Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Online Learning (OL) department presented at the 20th Annual 2017 Texas Distance Learning Association Conference (TxDLA). The conference took place at the Moody Gardens Hotel in Galveston, Texas from March 28-31. In support of this year’s theme, “The Spirit of Adventure,” the conference featured a variety of subjects and activities to help encourage members to push beyond the familiar.

The TxDLA is an association that promotes the development of distance learning and supports collaborating on effective strategies with other distance learning distance experts globally. The annual conference allows organizations to discover new and successful methods utilized by other organizations. Some of the 2017 sessions included:

- Educational Technology
- Innovative and Best Practices
- Research
- Leadership
- Accessibility and Universal Design
- Cybersecurity and Data Analytics
- Faculty and Student Support
- Educational Outreach
- Gamification and Virtualization

During the conference, members were given a presentation from OIT’s Instructional Designer, Melissa Padalecki. Padalecki presented, “Fast Track Design for Online Courses.” The presentation elaborated on a consultation process used to assist faculty tasked with preparing online courses in a uniquely short frame. Attendees were walked through a comparison of traditional projects versus consultations, the recommendations of a fast focus, and examples of resources useful for addressing such situations.

UTSA COEHD Receives Funding from the OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund for Research Initiative and Prospective Graduate Course

March 31| San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
OIT Academic Support Solutions Funds

The UTSA College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) is one of six UTSA colleges to be awarded funding from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund, formerly the Technology Fund. The award will assist associate dean of Academic Affairs, Director of Recruitment and Engagement and Associate Professor in the UTSA department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Technology, Theodorea Berry, Ed.D., in conducting qualitative research on traditionally marginalized women in academia for a project entitled “Documentary Narrative Analysis.”

The aim of the project is two-fold. It will first chronicle the experiences of a cohort of UTSA faculty from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds who have been employed in higher education for at least 20 years. The study will explore each participant’s experiences in the classroom by examining the impact of race and gender on the teaching and learning experience in an effort to show some of the disparities in higher education.

“I was elated after learning that this project was awarded funding,” said Dr. Berry. “My hope is that this documentary will motivate other young women representative of the participants in the study to potentially seek out the goal of becoming a college professor.”

In addition, the project will offer a prospective graduate level course for UTSA students in film-making. The seminar-style course will be offered through the UTSA Graduate School and will enable interested Master’s and Doctoral students from all backgrounds to gain an in-depth understanding of narrative and documentary research.

“I wanted to find ways to engage in a study to explore the use of technology to document individual studies,” Dr. Berry explained. “I also wanted to find out how to teach graduate students to engage in that kind of work so that theses and dissertations are not always about what is on paper but also what people can visualize.”

Support from the OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund has enabled Dr. Berry and the COEHD to purchase technology needed for the filming of the documentary as well as to assist students in the completion of the prospective course. Some of the technology purchased include iPad Airs, and accessories such as lenses, microphones and tripods. In addition, software to assist in the editing process was also purchased.

In the fall of 2016, a call for proposals was distributed to each UTSA college, by way of the OIT Faculty Advisory Committee, encouraging members to submit proposals for funding of a technology project aimed at enhancing student life. This committee convenes on a quarterly basis and serves as a liaison between OIT and UTSA faculty.

A sub-committee of undergraduate and graduate UTSA students, along with OIT managers and staff, was formed to vote on proposals. Departments were awarded funding based on their proposal’s alignment with at least one of the goals of Blueprint UTSA and its adherence to the guidelines of the Automated Services and Computer Access Charge.
The UTSA Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) provides computing, storage, and visualization resources to all UTSA faculty and students. UTSA has many research applications available to all majors including statistics, data analysis, molecular modeling, scientific and engineering simulation and visualization. In fall 2017, UTSA students, faculty, and staff will be welcomed with a newly improved Shamu.

Shamu is a centrally shared high performance computing (HPC) cluster currently comprised of:

- 52 physical servers.
- 1784 Total CPU Cores.
- 13 TB of shared memory.
- 96 TB of shared disk storage.
- 4 Nvidia Tesla K80 GPU nodes.
- 1 node with 72 E7-8800v4 XEON cores and 1.5 TB RAM.

UTSA’s Research Computing Support Group Enhances the Shared High Performance Computing Cluster

March 31| San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Pebby Garner

UTSA’s Research Computing Support Group at discussion about Shamu.

Shamu has many different software packages available including: MATLAB, Abaqus, ParaView, VisIt, Visualization Toolkit (VTK), Octave, JAVA, Mathematica and LS-DYNA.

In fall 2017, the RCSG will be making updates to the data storage on Shamu. This enhancement will benefit the university by providing better data transfer rates as well as increased disk performance and capacity. Network connectivity to Shamu will also be increased from 1 GB to 10 GB.

RCSG has also collaborated with Information Security Specialist Pebby Garner to supply a campus wide “site” license for MatLab. The new MatLab license includes unlimited usage and is available to all UTSA students, faculty and staff. Users will also be provided with more “toolbox” options commonly used on the HPC cluster Shamu. Some of the toolbox options include:

- Bioinformatics Toolbox.
- Communication Systems Toolbox.
- Curve Fitting Toolbox.
- Data Acquisition Toolbox.
- GADS (Global Optimization Toolbox).
- Image Processing Toolbox.
- Identification Toolbox.
- MatLab.
- MatLab Builder for Java (MatLab Compiler SDK).
- MatLab Compiler.

UTSA Shamu.

Visitors observing the UTSA VizWall.
The Office of Information Technology
Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed

QUARTER TWO
April | May | June

Reflections of 2017

OIT Application Development and Support Senior
IT Project Manager Jerry Smith

“I wanted to extend my appreciation of Jerry’s partnership and collaboration in recent and past RFP response reviews. His attention to detail, quick response, and most importantly, willingness to actively review and participate allows our office to select high-quality vendors. This in turn makes Campus Services and UTSA successful. Additionally, his participation in the Parking Appeals Board allows our office to give students and employees an unbiased review of their citation review. As a voluntary and thankless task that it is, we appreciate his ongoing partnership. One of the guiding principles of Business Affairs is that we Value people and as such I wanted to convey that our office appreciates his partnership.”

Submitted by: Clay Haverland, CASP
Assistant Vice President for Campus Services

OIT Staff Members

“Saw several OIT staff members push a stalled vehicle out of the way on UTSA Blvd during lunch. I thought it was very noble of them. People were recklessly driving down the wrong way and there could have been an accident. OIT saved the day! I am sure they did it without a second thought, but I was grateful for them and I am sure everyone else was also!”

Submitted by: Angel Olivares
Academic Advisor

Brent League
Dan Byrd
George Zavala
Jason Skow
OIT Collaborates with the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars

April 5 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Danicia Steele, Dustin Barrows, Gerard Bustos, James Borrego, Jose Carrillo, Stephen Mathews, Steven Lopez and Yuri Martinez Ramos

Link(s) http://provost.utsa.edu/adts/

During spring 2017, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Video Production Group (VPG), Customer Relations and Communications (CRC), and Learning Technology team collaborated with the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars (ADTS). ADTS was established in 2012 and is made up of over 30 UTSA faculty members who symbolize excellence in teaching. Each semester ADTS hosts a Shared Experiences Forum allowing members to share their best teaching and learning practices with other UTSA faculty.

ADTS hosted two live stream Shared Experiences Forum on March 8th and April 5th. The forums featured “Does Size Impact Pedagogy?” focusing on teaching large classes and “How to Reduce Percentages, Not Quality” as they revisited drop, fail, and withdrawal rates (DFWs). Both forums took place in the UTSA Faculty Center Assembly Room (JPL 4.04.22).

OIT collaborated with Senior Lecturer in the UTSA College of Business and member of ADTS Thomas Cannon, Jd.D., to provide marketing for the Shared Experiences Forum. Communications Specialist Danicia Steele and Multimedia Designer Yuri Martinez Ramos with CRC provided direct email marketing to the UTSA faculty. Steele and Martinez-Ramos also constructed surveys and certificates that were given out after each forum.

During the event, Video Production Manager Gerard Bustos was the live stream producer and Senior Producer James Borrego served as the technical director. Additionally, Video Producers Stephen Matthews and Jose Carrillo operated the cameras for both forums, while, Manager of Learning Technologies Dustin Barrows and Supervisor of Learning Technologies Steven Lopez assisted with sound. The live stream was beneficial to a significant amount of faculty who were not able to attend in person. Bustos stated, “the forum is informative and beneficial to faculty and live streaming allows all faculty the opportunity to improve their practices for UTSA students.”

The forum takes place each semester and is open to all UTSA faculty. OIT has already began collaborating with ADTS members on future marketing strategies for the fall semester.

Faculty participating at Shared Experiences Forum.

From left to right: James Borrego, Gerard Bustos and Dustin Barrows producing the Shared Experiences Forum live stream.

ADTS members during a panel discussion on “Does Size Impact Pedagogy?”

Stephen Matthews operating the live stream camera.
OIT Staff Represents UTSA at the 2017 InnoTech Conference

April 12 - 13 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring: Danicia Steele, Ernest Hernandez III, Gerard Bustos, James Borrego, Rosalind Ong and Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
Presenter(s): Jayashree Iyengar
Panelist(s): Anthony Espinoza and Chip Meadows

UTSA’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff members represented the university at the 2017 annual InnoTech Conference. The conference took place from April 12 - 13 at the Norris Conference Center in San Antonio, Texas.

The InnoTech Conference presents an opportunity for IT staff to collaborate and discuss current technology issues and successful techniques used in their IT work environment. At the event, guests are given the opportunity to attend sessions, a vendor fair, and special events. Some of the session topics included mobility, IT security, IT leadership, and business intelligence/analytics.

Director of Application Development and Support (ADS) Jayashree Iyengar served as a speaker on April 12 for “Enterprise DevOps: It Takes a Village.” The session focused on the community of stakeholders needed to achieve cultural transformation in enterprise DevOps. On the following day, Senior Information Security Analyst Chip Meadows served as a panelist for “Security Engagement Series: Advanced Persistent Threat.” The security panel provided different viewpoints on Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs) affecting their establishments and the steps they are taking to avoid, identify and respond to the threats.

On April 13, Interim Executive Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza represented UTSA at the InnoTech special event. Espinoza served as a panelist during the CIO Panel Forum presented by the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Technology Council. The event opened with the new North San Antonio Chamber CIO Panel video highlighting perspectives from CIOs, entrepreneurs, and millennial students on innovation, customer service, and digital disruption. The video was created by the following UTSA OIT Staff members:

- Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III
- Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
- Video Production Manager Gerard Bustos
- Senior Producer James Borrego
- Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong
- Communications Specialist Danicia Steele

During the CIO Panel forum, Espinoza and other panelists discussed the “Business Value of IT Innovation” where they provided different viewpoints on IT innovation and shared how they position their business strategy to prepare for competitive innovation now and in the near future. The event concluded with an open discussion as panelists responded to pertinent questions from attendees.
Senior Enterprise System Programmer Sylvia Dorgan from the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) along with staff members from the UTSA Office of Financial Services, was presented with the Team Spirit Award at this year’s University Excellence Awards. The award ceremony was held on April 13th in the H-E-B University Center Ballroom (HUC 1.104) on the UTSA Main Campus.

The University Excellence Awards ceremony recognizes exceptional UTSA staff from all three campuses, who demonstrate stellar performance. Each year, a total of seven categories of University Excellence Awards are granted to recipients.

This year, Dorgan, Gary Lott, director of Financial Services, Christopher Valles and Sam Suwal, associate bursars on the Main and Downtown campuses, respectively, were recognized for their outstanding collaboration in developing and implementing RowdyPay.

“Working on the implementation of RowdyPay was a great experience,” said Dorgan. “Since the team worked cohesively, we were able to complete the project on time and improve the student experience of interacting with Fiscal Services.”

Launched within the UTSA Mobile App in 2016, RowdyPay is a student payment portal designed to enable students to conveniently view their account balances in real-time and pay their tuition on their computer or smartphone.

“One of the things that I enjoy the most about being a part of OIT is that we work with so many offices across campus,” Dorgan explained. “Because of these interactions, we get to have an impact on the offices that directly work with students and faculty and improve their services.”
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) held the OIT 2017 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 Deputy Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Executive Director of Infrastructure Services Anthony Espinoza opened the conference.

UTSA Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department Professor and Chair Enrique Alemán Jr. Ph.D., delivered the keynote presentation titled "Utilizing Technology to Conduct Community-Based, Historical Research: The Case of Racial Inequity and Segregation in South Texas." Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., provided an introduction to Dr. Aleman’s keynote and also delivered the plaque thanking him for his presentation.

Information Security Operations Officer Kevin Kjosa delivered the closing remarks, providing attendees with a thoughtful reflection on the Spring Tech Conference and encouraging them to share their knowledge with colleagues for future events. The event was moderated by Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong who along with Communications Specialist Danicia Steele conducted the prize drawing segment of the conference.

More than 400 students, faculty, and staff attended sessions led by OIT staff and top technology providers including Apple, Qualtrics, MathWorks, Microsoft, Cisco, 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 Adobe, GTS, Abacus Computers Inc., CDW, Academic Advising, Top Hat, Commonwealth Computing Company, Online Learning, New Horizons, the Campus Technology store, and many more.

The event was a full OIT department endeavor which was led by:

**Project Sponsor:**
- Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., assistant vice provost for IT

**Conference Co-Chairs:**
- Rosalind Ong, project coordinator
- Mary-Margaret Echevarria, telecommunications manager

**Customer Relations and Communications Team:**
- Dalinda Milne, webmaster
- Yuri Martinez Ramos, multimedia designer
- Danicia Steele and Nicole Duff, communications specialists

**Business Operations Administration Team:**
- Sonia Hernandez, senior administrative associate
- Kelsey Evans, communications specialist
- Cindy Colston, administrative services officer III

**Spring Tech Conference Committee Members:**
- April Valdez, audio-visual services specialist
- Ben Garcia, director of Customer Service and Operations Support
- Brad Cooper, senior security analyst
- Edgar Madrigal, customer support supervisor
- Gerard Bustos, video production manager
- James Lee, systems analyst II
- Mark McCoy, OIT manager, platform application services
- Michael Brand, instructional development specialist
- Ryan Key, manager of Systems Infrastructure Services
- Thomas Freeman, technology solutions innovator

**Volunteers:**
- OIT department staff & VOICES student organization volunteers

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List of Presentations:

**Beyond the Help Desk: How to Get Technology Support - What are my Options?**
- Ben Garcia, director of Customer Service and Operations Support for OIT
- David Miller, client support manager for OIT
- Louis Badillo, OIT support services manager for OIT

**Collaborating on the Cloud: Office365 and SharePoint Online**
- Rosalind Ong, OIT project coordinator

**Conference Room Chat with OIT Management**
- Bryan Wilson, interim vice provost for information technology and chief information officer (CIO)
- Anthony Espinoza, interim deputy chief information officer (CIO) and executive director of infrastructure services
- Vanessa Hammker Kenon, Ed.D, assistant vice provost for IT
- Kevin Kjosa, information security operations officer
- Brent League, director of Research Computing Support and Innovative Services

**Data Storage Options**
- Mark McCoy, platform application services manager

**Digital Media: Protecting Your Data and Yourself**
- Lance Pritchard, senior information security analyst for OIT Information Security
- Brad Cooper, senior information security analyst for OIT Information Security

**Focusing on UTSA in Ultra HD: The OIT Video Production Group**
- Gerard Bustos, senior producer and production manager

**How to Maintain a Healthy Computer**
- Ben Garcia, director of Customer Service and Operations Support

**Lecture Capture in the Classroom: A Skype for Business Story**
- Robert Granado, assistant director of Learning Technologies

**Office Professional Plus**
- Mark McCoy, platform application services manager

**Research Computing Technology Available at UTSA**
- Brent League, director of Research Computing Support and Innovative Services

**Self-Paced Training and Learning: What Skillsoft has to Offer**
- Mary-Margaret Echevarria, telecommunications manager

**Student Innovation Coalition**
- Carlos Owen Gonzalez, lab assistant
- Leonard Mark Williams, print service manager
- Nicole Duff, communications specialist for OIT

**The Learning Studio**
- Joe Tobares, director of Learning Technologies

**UTSA’s Journey to a Standard Student Response System**
- Dustin Barrows, manager of Learning Technologies

**What’s New with UTSA Mobile App**
- Jayashree Iyengar, director of Application Development and Support (ADS)
- Greg Oliver, manager for Application Development and Support (ADS)
- Brad Christianson, enterprise system programmer
- Kyle Bonar, enterprise UI designer/developer

**Would You Like to Monitor Your Student Performance Using Blackboard Learn? Come and Discover How the Office of Online Learning Can Help You!**
- Mayra Collins, instructional designer for OIT Distance Learning
- Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., senior instructional designer for OIT Distance Learning
Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., is among several UTSA faculty and staff to participate in this year's American Educational Research Association (AERA) meeting. The meeting, which convened in San Antonio, Texas for the first time, ran from April 27-May 1st. Sessions were held at three locations downtown, namely, the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, The Grand Hyatt and The Marriott Riverwalk.

As part of the AERA’s opening day, Dr. Kenon served as the chair for a session entitled “Leading Teacher Efficacy: Principal Support, Teacher Needs, and Student Achievement.” This session featured a panel of five scholars who shared their research findings on collective teacher efficacy (CTE) and its effects on fostering student success.

On the conference’s penultimate day, Dr. Kenon served as a discussant for a session entitled “Tools for Professional Communication and Teaching.”

AERA unites over 25,000 researchers and academics from across the United States and around the world. As one of the largest professional meetings, this gathering boasts an array of events including roundtable discussions, panels, workshops, exhibits, meetings and seminars.

UTSA’s Office of Online Learning Presents at the 2017 USDLA National Conference

April 30 - May 3 | Indianapolis, IN
Featuring:
Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., and Marcela Ramirez

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Online Learning department presented at the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) 2017 National Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. The conference took place from April 30-May 3 at the Hilton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites.

The USDLA is a non-profit organization for online learning, research, development, training and communications. In celebration of 30 years of driving excellence in distance learning, the conference united distance-learning practitioners from across the country.

Senior Instructional Designer Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D., Director of Online Learning Marcela Ramirez, and Professor of Sociology Donna Williams Miller represented UTSA as they presented “Teaching Online: A Training Program to Help Faculty Become Online Teaching Champions.” The presentation focused on the pilot experience of the self-paced Teaching Online course, a fully online course opened to UTSA faculty who want to explore best practices for online teaching. Attendees were walked through the steps for designing an online course and the recommended skills instructors should consider.
During the late spring and early summer, two managers from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) joined other professionals from across the nation for U.S. Army Educators Tours.

Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia, travelled to Washington and Virginia, respectively, to represent UTSA at two separate U.S. Army 5th Brigade (BDE) Educators Tours.

These tours are aimed at highlighting the career and educational opportunities available for our youth in the U.S. Army. As part of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Campaign by the 5th BDE, these tours seek to emphasize STEM-related opportunities that are available for students, graduates and educators.

Dr. Kenon participated in the Army 5th Recruiting BDE Educators Tour, which was held on May 2nd - 5th in Washington.

In an effort to showcase the benefits of the Army for our youth, the tour provided Dr. Kenon and other participants with an exclusive visit to several military departments of the Department of Defense (DOD). Some of these included the National Security Agency, the Cyber Command and the Pentagon.

Dr. Kenon and other participants were also able to learn about the array of jobs that exist in the military. In addition, they were given the opportunity to meet the most senior intelligence general and enlistment general in the Army.

“This is a wonderful partnership and collaboration opportunity with the DOD and the U.S. Army,” said Dr. Kenon. “They do so much to support UTSA.”

UTSA is one of several Texas institutions that has an Army ROTC program, which offers electives in the field of Military Science, coupled with leadership training.

Similarly, Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia represented UTSA at the U.S. Army Recruiting Command’s National Education Tour. The event occurred from June 21st -22nd in Fort Lee, Virginia.

The tour enabled Garcia, along with 25 other participants from across the U.S. to garner insights about the 150 career opportunities available within the Army. Some of these include culinary arts, robotics and logistics.

In addition, Garcia and other participants were able to engage in various interactive activities such as the Re-configurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer (RVTT) demonstration and the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST).

“The Army has demonstrated, that again, it positions its Soldiers for success, from education, to training, citizenship, and character, said Garcia. “That is what K-12, post-secondary, and we, in higher education are trying to accomplish. We are trying to position our students for success by the resources we offer.” The Army is the blueprint for that.”

To further support DOD initiatives, Dr. Kenon also served as one of the dignitaries to represent UTSA at the change of command ceremony at the Alamo in downtown, San Antonio.

The event was held on June 29th, and allowed Battalion members and other attendees to welcome the new commander, Lt. Col. D’Angelo Blount.

Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., along with other tour attendees at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. Photo Courtesy: US Army Recruiting Battalion San Antonio


Ben Garcia participates in the Re-configurable Vehicle Tactical Training demonstration at Fort Lee, Virginia. Photo Courtesy: US Army Recruiting

Ben Garcia along with other professionals and educators outside of the Joint Culinary Training Center in Fort Lee, Virginia. Photo Courtesy: US Army Recruiting
In summer 2017, the UTSA Office of Information Technology made updates to Shamu. This enhancement took place on Sunday, May 14 by OIT’s Enterprise Network Engineer Matthew Hoke. This update will benefit the university by providing better data transfer rates as well as increased disk performance and capacity.

Shamu is a centrally shared high-performance computing (HPC) cluster currently comprised of:

- 52 physical servers.
- 1784 total CPU Cores.
- 13 TB of shared memory.
- 96 TB of shared disk storage.
- 4 Nvidia Tesla K80 GPU nodes.
- 1 node with 72 E7-8800v4 XEON cores and 1.5 TB RAM.

Shamu has many different software packages available including MATLAB, Abaqus, ParaView, VisIt, Visualization Toolkit (VTK), Octave, JAVA, Mathematica, and LS-DYNA.

Before the update, Shamu only had a network connectivity of 1 Gb/s (Gigabit per second) available, which gave users limited network access. Now users have unlimited access to 10 Gb/s of connection which will enhance access to research resources on campus. Researchers now have the ability to connect to Shamu regardless of what speed their personal device supports.

“Professors that upload extremely large data sets for calculations to be done quickly now will benefit from faster results from the 10 Gb/s,” said Hoke. “We are trying to supply what researchers need today and build a framework for increasing bandwidth and ease of access to research resources.”

If a researcher has a connection with speeds lower than 10 Gb/s, the UTSA Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) provides a set of computing workstations in the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (MS 1.03.06N). The workstations are open to UTSA students, faculty and staff and allow users to perform research using a speed of 10 Gb/s without any additional cost.

In support of Internal Audit Awareness Month, Senior Information Security Analyst Chip Meadows represented UTSA at the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) Luncheon on May 17 at the Old San Francisco Steak House in San Antonio, Texas.

The IIA Luncheon allows audit professionals and organizations the opportunity to come together to promote their departments and help increase awareness of the value of internal audits within their organizations. The luncheon focused on “A Simple Day in the Life of IT Security” featuring recommended work methods and communication used in IT security.

During the luncheon, Meadows presented “What an Auditor Needs to Know” giving an introduction to IT auditing along with steps for communicating with technical staff. The presentation provided an overview of a typical day in IT security, highlighting daily objectives like alerts, policies, requests, assessments, and team meetings.

“Some assume that all auditors know the same language but that’s not always the case,” stated Meadows. Meadows elaborated on how the presentation also outlined methods for staying current in auditing and provided attendees with communication advice.
On May 20, Senior Information Security Analyst Chip Meadows presented at the BSides SATX 2017. The event took place from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas. The event combines security experts from a variety of organizations in search of the “next big thing” in information security. The event presents an opportunity for the safety experts and industry professionals to share ideas, insights, and network with others in the community.

At BSides, Meadows focused on the peer communication skills and career perspectives of IT security. His presentation “Why Soft Skills are No Longer Optional” elaborated on the soft skills an everyday tech person needs in addition to their technical expertise. The soft skills presentation expanded communications towards non-technical groups and mentoring younger staff to develop their abilities.

Enterprise Communications Technician George Zavala

“George received recognition for his work on the UTSA Chief of Police’s phone in June. He was presented with a ‘Challenge Coin’ in appreciation of his excellent service.”

Submitted by: Gerald Lewis
Chief of Police

OIT Client Support Manager David Miller and Network Tech/Support Specialist III Ashlee Vasquez

“Working with David Miller and Ashlee Vasquez in the preparation and follow-up for the UTSA Summer Prep Program this year has been seamless.”

Submitted by: Joules Webb
Associate Director TX SA PREP and TX PRE ENGINEERING Programs
Six University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) colleges have been awarded grants totaling $125,000 from the UTSA Office of Information Technology Academic Support Solutions Fund, formerly the Technology Fund. The awards will assist each college in the implementation of projects aimed at contributing to student success.

Last fall, OIT extended a call for proposals to all nine UTSA colleges by way of its Faculty Advisory Committee. This committee convenes on a quarterly basis and serves as a liaison between UTSA faculty and OIT. Interested UTSA colleges were encouraged to request support for student-centered projects that aligned with at least one goal of Blueprint UTSA. In addition, proposed projects were required to adhere to the guidelines of the UTSA Automated Services and Computer Access Charge.

“All of the proposals were excellent,” said Vanessa Hammler Kenon, assistant vice provost for Information Technology and chair of the OIT Faculty Advisory Committee. “They were creative, innovative and based on students’ needs and research directly connected to students.”

A sub-committee of the Faculty Advisory Committee, comprised of OIT staff and UTSA students was created to vote on proposals. After a brief deliberation, the sub-committee decided to award funding of varying amounts to all applicants as part of OIT’s ongoing commitment to fostering technological innovations and student achievement at UTSA.

“Our funds are very limited and we wish we could do more,” said Kenon. “Although this is a variable budget line, we are trying to fund these projects even in tightly funded years because it is so important to UTSA’s mission in so many areas.”

The Office of Information Technology Faculty Advisory Committee discusses technology implementations to foster student success.

UTSA Office of Information Technology awards grants to six UTSA colleges to support student success initiatives

May 26 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
Author(s):
Nicole Duff

The six colleges and their awarded projects include:

**College of Architecture, Construction and Planning**
- “Meeting the Demands of Architecture and Interior Design Students’ Digital Skills”

**College of Business**
- “Tier One Technology for a Tier One Program”

**College of Education and Human Development**
- “Documentary Narrative Analysis”
- “Psychological Assessment and Consultation Center: Adopting an Electronic Health Records and Practice Management System”

**College of Engineering**
- “UAV-Based Thermal Infrared Remote Sensing for Enhancing UTSA Campus Sustainability, Urban Planning and Students Learning”
- “High Performance Dell Workstation to support Geoinformatics Education and Research”
- “High Speed Research Computing Network Demonstration Project”
- “Pilot Study for Determining the Efficacy of Utilizing VDI in Engineering”

**College of Liberal and Fine Arts**
- “Upgrading Technology in the Graduate Anthropology Lab”
- “Psychology Shared Research Lab Refresh”

**College of Sciences**
- “Student Collaboration Table”
- “Cyber Security Lab Computer Refresh”
- “Expand Cyber Security Enrollments”

OIT plans to make funds available for the upcoming academic year and a call for proposals will be circulated to all UTSA colleges in early July. Interested colleges are encouraged to apply via their OIT Faculty Advisory Committee representative.

UTSA is ranked among the top 400 universities in the world and among the top 100 in the nation, according to Times Higher Education.
Director of Customer Services and Operations Support Ben Garcia served as a guest speaker at a recent Help Desk Institute (HDI) San Antonio Local Chapter meeting. Director of Student Computing Services Linda Dunn, Systems Analyst II James Lee and StudentConnect Support staff Ricky Castillo co-presented along with Garcia. The event occurred on June 15 at the New Horizons Computer Learning Center in San Antonio, Texas.

The team’s interactive presentation entitled “Leveraging Social Media within Information Technology,” offered attendees a first-hand look at the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) social media strategy.

“Our presentation focused on how we are leveraging social media within IT, particularly how we are using it from a support perspective,” said Garcia, former VP of Communications for the HDI San Antonio local chapter. “Although social media was a big part of the discussion, we also looked at how we utilize social media channels not only for providing information, but also for receiving ticketing requests and offering support.”

During the presentation, the team demoed various social media channels managed by both StudentConnect and wider OIT staff. The team also provided attendees a demo of Hootsuite, a popular social media management platform, for which OIT recently purchased numerous licenses.

In addition, the team offered attendees a glimpse into the history of StudentConnect, a service designed to provide technical support to UTSA students and their personal devices. Launched in August 2016, this OIT service is supported by the StudentConnect team mostly comprised of students.

Other topics the team explored at the event included some of the benefits and challenges associated with integrating social media use within a help desk environment and how social media can be viewed as part of an organization’s brand. The event culminated in a Q&A session.

As a highly attended meeting for the HDI Local San Antonio Chapter, the event boasted representatives from several organizations including Whataburger, CPS and community colleges from the Corpus Christi region. OIT Academic Support Manager Louis Badillo was also in attendance.

“I felt honored that we were invited to present at this meeting,” said Garcia. “HDI invited us to make this presentation after a September 2016 roundtable discussion in which I discussed what we were doing at the time with the StudentConnect launch. I think that discussion helped put UTSA on the map and our recent presentation further promotes what we are doing here at UTSA.”

As an international professional association and technical support community, HDI provides a forum for professionals in the IT field to network and exchange best practices. UTSA has been a member of HDI for more than six years.
On June 19, Enterprise Research Application Support Analyst Zhiwei Wang in the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) hosted a High-Performance Computing (HPC) training. The training took place in the UTSA VizLab (MS 1.03.06N) from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and was open to UTSA faculty and staff.

During the training, attendees were given an overview of UTSA’s HPC cluster, Shamu, managed by RCSG. Customers were given a hands-on experience on the basic level skills for using Shamu. The class provided the proper steps for:

- Logging into the cluster
- Starting an application
- Creating a simple job description for the cluster
- Submitting a job request

“Recently I helped some researchers in the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) to utilize Shamu for their 3D modeling project. The estimated process time for one data set was 40 hours when using their desktop computers,” said Wang. “However, once they used Shamu, the processing time reduced to 20 minutes per data set.”

Wang also explained the concept of parallel computing and why customers should consider using it to speed up their data processing as opposed to sequential computing. Furthermore, the attendees were introduced to the different parallel computing system categories, helping them find which option is most beneficial for their daily workload.

“In today’s world, it’s difficult to do any research without computing support, and reliable computing support has an enormous impact on the research results,” stated Wang. “This training will help customers enhance their research capability by learning and experiencing parallel computing concepts.”

Customers were also introduced to the Sun Grid Engine (SGE), a powerful HPC cluster management software used for resource management and job scheduling.

Additional High-Performance Computing training is slated for July 14th and July 21st. In fall 2017, the training will be open to students as well.
Assistant Vice Provost for IT Among Group of OLC Conference Leaders to Help Devise the New Media Consortium 2017 Toolkit

June 24 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Vanessa Hammller Kenon, Ed.D.

Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology and Principal Investigator for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant Vanessa Hammller Kenon, Ed.D., is among a group of attendees of the Online Learning Consortium International Conference (OLC) 2016 pre-conference workshop to help develop a 2017 Toolkit.

The invitation-only workshop allowed participants to discuss challenges to student success that are prevalent in higher education institutions across the U.S. Dr. Kenon and 44 other leaders from 38 institutions and organizations across the nation considered possible solutions to the challenges that were discussed. During the workshop Dr. Kenon shared the experiences and collaborative work of various departments at UTSA and the iPASS committee to implement advising technology tools as well as other initiatives to support student success at UTSA.

As a result of this workshop, the 2017 Toolkit, entitled “Scaling Solutions Across Higher Education: The NMC Horizon Project in Action” was developed. This document is supported by the BMGF and was recently published by the New Media Consortium (NMC).

In an effort to continue the narrative that was started at the pre-conference workshop, the Toolkit is designed to encourage readers to continue “Scaling Solutions” workshops at their institutions and organizations to address barriers to equity and access. It features prompts, checklists, activity guides and sample emails designed to assist with the implementation of these workshops. In addition, the Toolkit contains various real-life strategies formulated by participants to help move solutions from a theoretical to a practical perspective in the hopes of eliminating these obstacles to higher education.

The document offers readers different perspectives on solutions to problems that exist in higher education in order to help leaders, faculty and students execute these solutions. The NMC is a community of experts in educational technology that seeks to drive innovation across institutions of higher education.

UTSA Office of Online Learning Introduces SoftChalk Cloud for Faculty

June 26 | San Antonio, TX
Featuring:
Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D.

In fall 2017, UTSA faculty can look forward to the newest version of SoftChalk Create 9, SoftChalk Cloud. SoftChalk Cloud is an e-learning authoring tool used to create digital lessons hosted in an Internet-based platform. Unlike SoftChalk Create 9, the new version will be available on both the desktop and the cloud. The cloud version will give users the option to create and update their lessons directly on the cloud and save them automatically in different Blackboard courses. Faculty can also share and edit the same lesson among multiple users, explore the SoftChalk Share Repository and access a huge variety of free lessons available to the SoftChalk community.

Beginning August 2017, UTSA’s Office of Online Learning will offer training to all faculty on the best practices and recommendations when using SoftChalk Cloud. The training is structured to help faculty create engaging lessons that reflect the instructors’ unique teaching styles and will provide different examples and guidelines based on the faculty’s level of confidence with SoftChalk Cloud: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

“In contrast to SoftChalk Cloud is a great tool for multimodal content representation. It allows faculty to create engaging activities that let students interact with content and self-check their knowledge,” said Senior Instructional Designer, Claudia Arcolin, Ph.D. “The tool is user-friendly and allows faculty to build on their previous experience with common writing and editing tools like Word.”

The cloud version is beneficial to both faculty and students as it allows instructors to personalize each lesson and adjust to the different learning styles. Instructors can add interactive activities to their lessons such as quizzes, crosswords, polls, and much more. Lessons can also include hyperlinks, embedded videos or images, and a highlight section, limiting the student’s navigation and making everything needed available in one lesson.

New and current users can attend fall training for assistance setting up the SoftChalk Cloud and transferring over their current lessons.
"We have implemented the ability for past and current students to request a transcript through an easy-to-use website that is available in any platform including our mobile app," said Greg Oliver, OIT manager of ADS. "They can either request a paper or an electronic copy which can be sent to themselves, a prospective employer or another institution."

In addition, the ADS team works on projects that are less visible to the entire UTSA community. For instance, the team is responsible for automating paper forms such as student petitions and graduate school forms as well as card access request forms for the UTSA Police Department and support offices.

The team also supports, maintains and gathers student data from Banner along with faculty and staff data from PeopleSoft to help create identities for new students and employees in order to grant them access to all of the UTSA systems.

"The ADS team interfaces ASAP to the National Student Clearinghouse for enrollment verification to see what’s being reported to the state," explained Laurie Trevino, OIT manager of ADS. "We also link to TouchNet for online payments and to a third-party company for the AlcoholEdu and Haven required trainings, which address alcohol and drug usage and sexual assault and the advocacy of healthy relationships, respectively."

To help support these and other platforms, the ADS team works in conjunction not only with OIT areas, but also other UTSA departments.

"ADS collaborates with every office from Parking to Facilities to Student Affairs," said Iyengar. "We are the front-face between OIT and the UTSA community for building and developing applications."

Currently, the team is working on implementing ChatBot, a program which will provide computer-generated responses to help answer students’ technical support questions. In summer 2017, ADS will hire student workers to continue working on this project, according to Oliver.

"ChatBot will be student-focused and will allow students to text questions such as ‘How do I use PrintSpot?’ and receive an automatic reply from a computer," Oliver explained. "If they ask questions that the computer is unable to understand, it will prompt them to talk directly to a live representative at one of our IT Help Desks."

The work of the ADS team clearly embodies OIT’s motto: ‘Collaborate – Innovate – Succeed.’

UTSA's Mobile App, Blackboard, Bluebook and ASAP are a few popular resources designed to enhance the experience of our students, faculty and staff. But did you know that these and other applications are available thanks to the dedication of the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Application Development and Support team?

The Application Development and Support team or simply ADS as it is called by IT staff, comprises 20 full-time employees. ADS staff work diligently behind the scenes to design, develop, test and provide applications to the UTSA community through partnerships with vendors like DubLabs and Ellucian.

"ADS serves as a conduit between various functional departments and areas within IT in providing solutions to streamline processes and data flows," said Jayashree Iyengar, director of ADS. "We also provide support for automating various processes aimed at supporting student success initiatives."

Fostering innovation through automation is one of ADS’ main goals. To achieve this goal, the ADS team has developed a repertoire of applications to help the UTSA community succeed.

Some of its noteworthy achievements include furnishing the UTSA Mobile App with additional features such as RowdyPay, which allows students to conveniently pay their tuition on-the-go and a registration module that enables students to easily sign up for classes on their mobile device.

The team also recently modified the transcript request process for students, by designing a user-friendly portal through which students and alumni can submit requests via an electronic device.
Manager of Learning Technologies Dustin Barrows

"Thank you for your support in making the New Faculty Orientation a success. Your participation in the presentation “Teaching and Learning Services and OIT” was invaluable to the new faculty. Thank you for taking the time to be part of the new faculty’s first day at UTSA and leaving a lasting impression."

Submitted by: Jesse T. Zapata, Ph.D.
Senior Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support

Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia and the entire UTSA OIT team

"Please join us in extending a huge thank you to Ben Garcia and the entire UTSA OIT team for the excellent presentation on how they use Social Media to help support their enterprise. This was an extremely informative presentation that was well received by all attendees. The event received a “Five Star” rating from attendees."

Submitted by: HDI San Antonio Board of Directors
In spring 2017, the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Video Production Group (VPG) collaborated with UTSA’s Police Department and the San Antonio Fire Department to produce a new “Active Shooter” training video to demonstrate how to respond in an active shooter situation.

UTSA takes safety seriously and provides online material to ensure that students, faculty, and staff all have the proper knowledge of what actions to take in an emergency situation. Once completed, the video will be part of the safety resources for the OIT.

Throughout summer 2017, VPG has been filming a new “Active Shooter” video on campus. The short film takes place on the main campus in the Business Building to help make the compliance training more relevant and relatable to the UTSA community. The video is being created by members of the UTSA Police Department, the San Antonio Community and the following VPG staff:

- Video Production Manager Gerard Bustos (Producer and Director of video Production)
- Senior Producer James Borrego (Director of Photography)
- Video Producer Jose Carrillo (Go Pro Camera Operator)
- Video Producer Stephen Matthews (Steady Cam Video Photographer)
- Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III (Executive Producer)

UTSA Officer Shawn Smith wrote the script for the film. Bustos produced the narration of this video in the VPG studio with UTSA Officer Paul English. The film depicts a typical day at UTSA from the perspective of faculty, staff, and students. Throughout the video, the audience is introduced to the following three key principles for survival:

1. Avoid: If possible, leave the area immediately and call 911.
2. Deny: If possible, lock the entrance to your location, remain quiet and call 911.
3. Defend: As a last resort, prepare to defend yourself.

Bustos said, “I’m pleased with how VPG worked together and committed to this project as a team. The cooperation from the UTSA Police Department was incredible, and everyone who participated gave 100%.”

The “Active Shooter” video will be beneficial to the UTSA community as it helps maximize its chance of survival during a dangerous event. It is important that, in the case of an emergency, all users take responsibility for their safety and have the proper mindset for survival. The training video is expected to be complete in fall 2017 and students, faculty and staff will have access to the training through ASAP and the UTSA Police Department website.
OIT Supports Student Success and Academic Advising Through the iPASS Grant

July 12 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Rosalind Ong, Vanessa Hammeler Kenon, Ed.D., and Vince Rivera

UTSA Executive Director of Academic Advising Barbara Smith, along with Director of Academic Advising Jackie Loden and Academic Advisor II Miranda Swain presented at the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) webinar held July 12, 2017. The webinar, which is available nationally, focused on the “Advisor Voice” and featured UTSA. Assistant Vice Provost for IT and iPASS Grant Principal Investigator Vanessa Hammeler Kenon, Ed.D., along with Project Coordinator and iPASS Lead Rosalind Ong assisted in organizing the event. Network Technician Vince Rivera served as technology facilitator to ensure the event ran smoothly.

During the webinar the UTSA Academic Advising team representatives along with representatives from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College provided an advisor perspective on their advising redesign story.

In reference to the academic advising technology changes made in partnership with the iPASS grant and OIT during the presentation, Loden noted that further discussion is needed to address the misconception that changes in technology symbolize that the previous versions failed. Adapting to change is necessary as new technology enhancements and innovation become available. “It’s important that we need to be comfortable always going through changes and improving. And definitely recognizing that it’s not failure if we move or change technology,” said Loden.

Academic Advising has been transforming over the past years including the transition to new advising technology systems including the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB’s) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus) and DegreeWorks platforms. To increase technology adoption, Academic Advising collaborated with the OIT Customer Relations, Communication and Training team in fall of 2016 to relaunch DegreeWorks through a marketing campaign after platform issues were addressed. DegreeWorks usage jumped from approximately 14% in spring of 2016 to 80% in spring of 2017. Additional student success tools will be introduced in the next academic year including mobile apps and a redesigned Academic Advising website.

The iPASS webinar is a part of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) iPASS Grant and is managed in partnership with EDUCAUSE and Achieving the Dream. UTSA is one of 26 institutions nationwide to receive this grant to support student success. The UTSA iPASS project is a collaboration between the UTSA Provost’s Office, Academic Advising, and OIT. It focuses on transforming three key areas to help students complete their degrees:

- Education planning
- Counseling and coaching
- Risk targeting and intervention

UTSA’s iPASS Vision

The goal of the iPASS project is to foster student success at UTSA to increase average retention and graduation rates. Students, advisors, faculty, and support staff will partner in a collaborative effort. iPASS will serve a key role in advancing student success and supporting students to reach their educational goals in complement with the THECB 60x30 TX, the UT System Student Success goals, the UTSA Blueprint, the CLASS initiative, and the OIT mission.

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, enhancing 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.

From left to right: Barbara Smith, Miranda Swain, and Jackie Loden prepare for the webinar. (Far right) Vince Rivera assists with setting up the webinar.

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From left to right: Barbara Smith, Miranda Swain, and Jackie Loden present during the iPASS "Advisor Voice" webinar.
Don’t Get Hooked! Work with UTSA’s Office of Information Security to Protect the University

July 14 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Edgar Guajardo, Danicia Steele, Nicole Duff, Rosalind Ong,
Mary-Margaret Echevarria, Ricky Castillo,
Luis Bustamante and Carlos Owen Gonzalez

The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Office of Information Security (OIS) team works daily to increase the awareness of cyber threats and educate UTSA faculty, staff, and students on cyber security practices. Due to the rise in phishing, OIS has collaborated with OIT’s Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team, to provide the anti-phishing campaign, “Don’t Get Hooked,” including mobile apps and a redesigned Academic Advising website.

Phishing emails appear to come from legitimate sources and usually direct users to a spoofed website. This site will ask for personal information, like usernames, passwords, or financial information. Phishing emails appear convincing by telling you the site detected fraudulent activity on your account. The email usually includes a statement indicating urgency (e.g. your account will be locked at the close of business today).

Once you enter your information on the spoofed website, you will usually be referred to the valid site after being told, “You entered the incorrect user name” or a message along those lines. Some of the forged websites have the logic to capture your data, forward your entered data to the valid site, and log you in. In either case, your information will be compromised.

During summer 2017, OIT has been educating the UTSA community and incoming freshmen to help increase their awareness of cyber threats and educate UTSA faculty, staff, and students on cyber security practices. Due to the rise in phishing, OIS has collaborated with OIT’s Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team, to provide the anti-phishing campaign, “Don’t Get Hooked,” including mobile apps and a redesigned Academic Advising website.

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During summer 2017, OIT has been educating the UTSA community and incoming freshmen to help increase their awareness of cyber threats like phishing. Each week OIT staff have been participating in the Orientation Resource Fair to promote OIT services and cyber security awareness. Once students have participated in the weekly educational anti-fishing activity, to learn the proper steps so they “Don’t Get Hooked,” they are given an OIT phishing t-shirt to help promote cyber security awareness. The OIT staff members include:

- IT Assistant Edgar Guajardo
- Communications Specialist Danicia Steele
- Communications Specialist Nicole Duff
- Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong
- Telecommunications Manager Mary-Margaret Echevarria
- Lab Assistant Ricky Castillo
- IT Assistant Luis Bustamante
- Lab Assistant Carlos Owen Gonzalez

OIT has also been actively engaging and promoting security tips on social media. Each week followers are introduced to a new security tip or given a poll to test their knowledge on cyber security. Many incoming freshmen have also participated in the “Don’t Get Hooked Summer Selfie Contest” where users take a selfie supporting the “Don’t Get Hooked” campaign. At the end of the summer a winner will be selected randomly for a prize.

Information security is everyone’s responsibility and with our experienced OIS team, increased awareness, and the ability to “Do Your Part,” UTSA can succeed and win the battle against cyber threats. Make sure you are aware of cyber threats including phishing, which continues to be a threat on campus. There are hazards you can avoid by “Doing Your Part” with a little cyber hygiene. Cyber hygiene is a collection of steps that the university can take to improve our cyber security and be better protected online. These steps require users to:

1. Create a strong passphrase!
   Examples:
   - DO__Your_Part4CyberSecurity
   - BeAware&StaySafe
2. Use backup services for all your files.
3. Not click on links in emails from people you do not know.
4. Make good choices on how to transmit and process data!
**OIT’s Learning Technologies Team Hosts Academic Technology Unconference**

On July 21, 2018, at the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16), the second annual Academic Technology Unconference was held. The event featured light refreshments and lunch for attendees and was sponsored by Biamp, SKC Communications and Hitachi.

Held in the OIT Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16), the free and all-day event united local and nearby institutions for discussions aimed at fostering innovation at various campuses. It also served as an open forum for attendees to network with peers at other institutions and share insights and experiences related to the use of classroom technologies, vendors, and topics centered around academic technologies.

"The unconference allowed us to converse with individuals in an informal environment," said Joe Tobares, director of Learning Technologies. "This environment was designed to spark discussions between professionals who share the same passion for instructional technology and who want to technologically and pedagogically improve their campus."

Attendees were able to formulate the agenda for the event, as is customary at unconferences, which are usually devoid of keynotes, panels or poster sessions that are usually common at conferences. In addition, attendees were able to choose from an array of potential topics related to academic technologies including:

- Classroom furniture and technology
- Non-classroom technology
- Campus cable television
- Instructional technology
- Productivity and collaboration tools
- Multimedia production
- Support and training
- Conferencing technology
- Departmental policies, budgets, and personnel

The unconference featured light refreshments and lunch for attendees and was sponsored by Biamp, SKC Communications and Hitachi.

"The event went well overall," said Tobares. "A lot of ideas were shared on next-gen technologies and how we coordinate our area to better support faculty and students."

**OIT Hosts Inaugural End of Year Staff Appreciation Event**

On August 4, 2018, at the UTSA Denman Ballroom (U.C. 2.01.28), the Office of Information Technology (OIT) hosted its inaugural End of Year event for OIT and Strategic Goals event on August 4. More than 130 OIT staff attended the employee-appreciation event, which was held in the U.C. Denman Ballroom (U.C. 2.01.28) on the UTSA Main Campus.

The gathering provided a forum for Interim Vice Provost and CIO Bryan Wilson to update staff on the financial state of the department. In addition, Wilson shared insights regarding the department’s Strategic Plan, a document that contains student success strategies that OIT plans to employ to help the university attain Tier One recognition.

These strategies, which align with Blueprint UTSA, were developed by OIT staff who served on various OIT Strategic Committees. During the session, the following senior-level managers offered staff a glimpse into some of the student-focused initiatives that will be implemented within their areas:

- Interim Deputy CIO and Executive Director of Infrastructure Services Anthony Espinoza
- Information Security Operations Officer Kevin Kjosa
- Director of Research Computing Support Group Brent League
- Director of Online Learning Marcela Ramirez
- Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa HammelkenKenon, Ed.D.
- Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III

Following their remarks, Wilson reminded staff that OIT is a people-centered organization as reflected in its mission and vision statements, which were revised last fall.

"If you notice, technology is not in there, other than in our title," Wilson noted, in reference to the updated mission and vision statements. "That's key. Yes, technology is what we do, a lot of things we do is around technology, but that's not why we're here. We're here to support the university, and the university's mission of what they are trying to do in terms of student success and becoming a Tier One research institution. That's why we're here."

During the event, lunch was served and new OIT marketing items were introduced and provided to all OIT staff. Staff were also introduced to the OIT Suggestion Box, a new initiative aimed at encouraging employees to communicate their innovative ideas to Wilson. Suggestions that contain employees' contact information would receive a personal response directly from Wilson.

"I can't say this enough, how appreciative I am of all of you and the work that you do," Wilson stated to staff. "Without all of you in this room, we can't be successful."

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[Image of Director of Learning Technologies Joe Tobares]

[Image of Bryan Wilson and other OIT leaders at the Staff Appreciation Event]
Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia served as co-presenters for a breakout session at this year’s Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communications (TASSCC) Conference. The 2017 convening, which marked the 40th anniversary of the event, was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Antonio, Texas from August 6th – 9th.

During their highly interactive presentation entitled “Socially Fabulous or Fabulously Behind the Trends: How Does Your Social Media Stack Up?” the OIT duo offered attendees insights regarding assessing social media platforms.

In addition, they provided attendees with a live demo of Hootsuite, a popular social media management tool, which OIT utilizes to efficiently monitor its social media channels in real-time and in a central location. Currently, OIT is active on several social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Vimeo, which it uses to promote products, service offerings, and offer customer support.

Dr. Kenon and Garcia’s presentation also explored the Do’s and Don’ts of current social media platforms along with imminent conversations regarding social media.

As a takeaway, attendees were provided with a checklist to assess their own social media journeys at their respective organizations and institutions.

OIT Staff Share Technology Tips at College Bridge Program

August 10 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Mary-Margaret Echevarria and Rosalind Ong

Telecommunications Manager Mary-Margaret Echevarria and Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong presented “Technology for College Readiness” at the 2017 College Bridging Series on August 10 at the UTSA Downtown Campus. The event, presented by the Academy for Teacher Excellence (ATE) within the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) at UTSA, offers information on college readiness skills preparing high school students to transition to college. Session topics included financial aid, choosing a career and major, selecting the right university, time management, and resources for undergraduate students.

According to the ATE website, the academy focuses on the preparation of “Cultural Efficacious” individuals who hold a strong ethnic identity, demonstrate self-determination, employ critical reflections, exhibit positive efficacy, reveal sociocultural competence, and engage in transformative practices, in addition to having strong content, pedagogical, and technological-pedagogical knowledge.

During the presentation Echevarria and Ong discussed technology web resources, cloud resources, and mobile apps. Additionally, they shared information resources to help students stay informed such as following departments on social media, seeking internships, and taking advantage of student activities and forums such as the OIT Student Innovation Coalition.

Other presenters for the series included the Texas Workforce Commission, Randolph Brooks FCU, and several UTSA offices (Academic Advising, the Career Center, One Stop Enrollment, the Writing Center, and the Tomas Rivera Center).
Beginning fall 2017, iClicker will become UTSA’s official Student Response System. This change was based on an evaluation of the university’s need to standardize on a single Student Response System. During the process, the Office of Information of Technology (OIT) formed the UTSA Student Response System Standardization committee, which included both UTSA faculty and OIT staff.

In support of the new adoption, UTSA’s Office of Learning Technology provided training throughout August 2017. The training was open to all UTSA faculty and was offered at both the Main and Downtown campuses in the morning and afternoon. Assistant Director of Learning Technologies Robert Granado Jr. hosted each training session.

During the training, faculty were given an overview of the iClicker Cloud platform as they were informed that the cloud would allow them to access their information from any location. They were also walked through the different products that support the cloud including the iClicker + remote, the iClicker 2 remote, and the iClicker Reef mobile app. Attendees were given the benefits of all products to help them determine which could better fit the needs of their students and support their class.

Granado guided faculty through registering and using the iClicker from a student perspective. Faculty were given a chance to participate in engaging classroom activities using both the remote and Reef. The activities included multiple choice, short answers, target selection, and numeric answers. After viewing the Student Response System from the student perspective, faculty were provided with a better understanding of how the iClicker platform works and the different activities.

Towards the end of the training, faculty were given a walkthrough of setting up their instructor iClicker Cloud account. During the walkthrough, they were able to register their courses and integrate them onto Blackboard Learn for students to access. Granado also informed the class how to set up their activities, track attendance, and synchronize their grades directly to Blackboard.

At the end of the course, faculty were informed that iClicker base stations have now been placed in all provost owned general purpose classrooms with updated frequencies, making it easier for faculty to access their instructor iClicker Cloud account and track accurate attendance. All attendees were given a complimentary instructor iClicker remote for attending the training and registering their courses in the iClicker Cloud.

The Office of Learning Technologies will be offering additional training throughout the fall 2017 and spring 2018 semesters. In addition, there will be an expert representative from iClicker on hand to assist with questions or concerns.
The Office of Information Technology Kicks Off the New Year at UTSA Roadrunner Days

August 22 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions: Danicia Steele, Dustin Barrows, Nicole Duff, Roxann Koch, Rosalind Ong and Yuri Martinez Ramos

New and returning students kicked-off the new academic year with UTSA Roadrunner Days. Roadrunner Days is a 10-day Roadrunner Nation festivity on both the Main and Downtown campuses filled with exciting and important events designed to help students get involved. During this time, students are educated on UTSA, introduced to valuable student resources and entertained with great engaging events.

On August 22, UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team participated at the “President’s BBQ on the Lawn” on the Main Campus. The event took place from 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. and provided free food and live entertainment. During this time, OIT educated the students on the student services, upcoming events, iClicker, and passed out OIT T-shirts in exchange for iClicker receipts from the Rowdy Campus Bookstore.

The CRCT team also participated at the “President’s BBQ on the Plaza” at the Downtown Campus along with Manager of Learning Technologies Dustin Barrows and Customer Support Supervisor Roxann Koch. The event took place at the Bill Miller Plaza from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. During this time, OIT educated the students on the student services, upcoming events, iClicker, and passed out OIT T-shirts in exchange for iClicker receipts from the Rowdy Campus Bookstore.

- Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong
- Communications Specialists Danicia Steele
- Communications Specialists Nicole Duff
- Multimedia Designer III Yuri Martinez Ramos

Link(s) http://roadrunnerdays.utsa.edu
Incoming and returning graduate anthropology majors will be greeted by more efficient technology with faster speeds in the Graduate Anthropology Lab in the fall of 2017. This past spring, the UTSA Department of Anthropology purchased new lab equipment thanks to support provided by the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund.

The Graduate Anthropology Lab is housed in the McKinney Humanities Building (MH 3.02.52) on the UTSA Main Campus. This lab serves 60 top-tier masters and doctoral students each semester and enables students to not only conduct graduate research, but also receive academic training and engage in online courses.

“A lot of our students receive external funding from competitive agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Fulbright Program, among others,” said Sonia Alconini, Ph.D., associate professor of Anthropology and coordinator of the lab. “Therefore, we needed the systems to work efficiently in order to facilitate student success and promote graduate research.”

This need prompted Dr. Alconini to submit a proposal to the OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund last fall, requesting funding to replace 15 of the central processing units (CPUs) to ensure the continued success of the Anthropology graduate students. These units were plagued with limited internal memory and processing capabilities.

However, the grant that OIT awarded to the department, instead enabled the department to purchase 20 new Dell CPUs along with keyboards and mice. With the new computers in place, it was possible to install various programs on the lab’s machines, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software like ArcGIS. This software is essential to conduct spatial analysis, a critical component in graduate student research.

“Before the upgrade, the computers in the lab were really slow,” said Adam Birge, second-year anthropology Ph.D. student. “Running sophisticated ArcGIS programs can be a pain if the computer is not up to speed. But now with the upgrade, students like myself can use the computers a lot better.”

The newly purchased CPUs are fully equipped with 16GB of expandable internal memory, which, according to Dr. Alconini is necessary for students to process large files and to utilize the installed software that they would otherwise have had to purchase themselves.

As one of the largest programs with a significant number of graduate students, the UTSA Anthropology program is among the first UTSA fields to have a Ph.D. program. This program contains a cohort of top-tier Roadrunners who receive external funding from the National Geographic, the Ford Foundation and the Graduate Research Fellowship Program among other competitive external sources.

With the updated technology in the lab, graduate students can now conduct research more efficiently as this is a crucial component of the application process for funding.

“This would have been impossible without OIT’s support,” said Dr. Alconini. “We really thank OIT for this award, as without it, we would still be using the old computing systems which we would not have been able to change due to limited resources.”
Faculty and staff from various departments and offices across the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) convened in the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16) from September 25-26 to exchange insights with peer institutions about best practices and technology initiatives to foster student success.

The convening, which was facilitated by OIT, enabled stakeholders from Academic Advising, University College, the Tomas Rivera Center, the First-Year Experience Program, the College of Liberal and Fine Arts and the College of Education and Human Development to engage in a group viewing of a two-day student success webinar hosted by EDUCAUSE.

The webinar focused on the theme “Addressing Student Success: Exploring Technology Enabled Advising” and featured presentations by 25 leaders from higher education institutions and organizations across the U.S. such as Georgia State University, Arizona State University, and Tyton Partners.

During the event, the UTSA team learned about some of the innovative technologies that its peer institutions have implemented as part of the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) initiative as well as their experiences with these tools. This initiative aims to leverage technology to transform advising and increase student retention and success.

“These technologies are allowing advisors to become more proactive,” said Barbara Smith, executive director of Academic Advising. “They also enable us to spot and connect with students before they become at-risk or off-course. Students have access to their degree plan and resources 24/7, and this helps them make more informed decisions.”

Some of these technologies used in Academic Advising include the degree planning and auditing tool DegreeWorks and the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB’s) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus). The latter features predictive analytics, which helps advisors to easily identify and assist at-risk students.

“The use of predictive analytics, technologies such as DegreeWorks, SSC-Campus, and evidence-based practices in academic advising positively impact student success,” said Tammy Wyatt, associate vice provost for student success.

“I was excited to hear that UTSA is in good company as it pertains to using these technologies and that like our peer institutions, we also have experienced similar challenges and successes.”

The webinar helped spark a conversation amongst the UTSA team about its current student success strategies including the Coordinated and Linked Approaches to Student Success (CLASS) initiative. The team also discussed the importance of having faculty buy-in with using the iPASS technologies.

“This summit was an excellent way to get faculty and staff, including advisors at all levels, together to network with their peers at institutions around the country,” said Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., assistant vice provost for Information Technology and principal investigator of the UTSA iPASS project. “These peer institutions have been highly successful with student success initiatives.”

UTSA, along with 26 other higher education institutions, is a recipient of the iPASS grant, which has assisted with the implementation of these innovative advising technologies. The grant is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. The UTSA iPASS project involves cross-campus collaboration with OIT, Academic Advising, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Institutional Research.
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team hosted the fall 2017 OIT Student Innovation Coalition on Tuesday, September 26 from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. More than 70 students, faculty, and staff attended this year’s event. Attendees were treated to lunch while hearing presentations on campus technology from various areas of OIT as well as Student Affairs. The event was facilitated by Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong and Communications Specialist Danicia Steele.

Ong opened the event with an introduction followed by an overview of the 2018 OIT Spring Tech Conference, encouraging attendees to save the date for the upcoming event.

2018 OIT Spring Tech Conference – Save the date! March 20, 2018!

- The OIT Spring Tech Conference is a full day conference with presentations, a vendor fair, and keynote lunch. The event is open to all UTSA students, faculty, and staff at no cost. In addition to learning about OIT services available at UTSA, participants will also learn about technology updates from vendors like Microsoft and Apple.

Jan McKinney, director of communications & administration for Student Affairs presented on the recently launched student success UTSA Guide App.

- The UTSA Guide App compiles a lot of information in one place and visually presents it to students in the form of a timeline path or a topical checklist with the goal of helping students to be successful over their four-year journey in higher education.

Greg Oliver, application development & support (ADS) manager demoed recent changes to the UTSA Mobile App, including an updated menu screen.

- The UTSA Mobile App allows users to set reminders for university events, check account balances, view class schedules and assignments, campus maps, and much more. OIT continually reviews the mobile app and adds new features.

Kevin Kjosa, information security operations officer, discussed cybersecurity threats, including phishing.

- Phishing awareness and education at UTSA are important to promote, cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility! Phishing emails appear to come from legitimate sources and usually direct users to a spoofed website that seeks to obtain personal information, like usernames, passwords, or financial information.

Steele led participants during the open forum segment of the program and reviewed several student resources including Office Professional Plus, OneDrive for Business, iClicker, and StudentConnect. The exchange prompted further conversations and presentations from OIT staff members.

Students had great feedback for the mobile apps and other OIT services. They also brought up important questions on other student services including Wi-Fi, cybersecurity, antivirus software, and Office 365 products. Several OIT leadership and staff members were on hand to answer students’ questions and provide insight on the department’s direction.

The Student Innovation Coalition is a great opportunity for students to learn about services available to them through OIT and for OIT leadership to garner student feedback to improve the campus technology.

The Student Innovation Coalition is held annually in the fall and is part of the annual OIT Spring Tech Conference.

Student comments from the 2017 Student Innovation Coalition:

“Great food, great conversations about important technological advancements at UTSA. All the speakers were very knowledgeable.”

Student attendee - Anonymous

“I wasn’t aware of the upgraded UTSA Mobile App before the conference- I downloaded the app two years ago, but deleted it because I didn’t find myself needing it. I will definitely use it now that is has high functionality.”

Ben Garcia responds to students’ inquiries during the event open forum.

Kevin Kjosa presents information on cybersecurity and phishing at the event.
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) recently completed a storage hardware update, replacing two storage arrays that hold more than 600 of the virtual servers that OIT maintains. A storage array is a data storage system used to store and maintain the campus data.

The original storage arrays had approximately 500 TB of usable capacity whereas the new arrays now have about 1PB of capacity. The new storage arrays rely heavily upon Solid-State-Drive (SSD) technology for providing the necessary disk performance that databases, video streaming, and other high performance and low-latency services require.

OIT conducted the upgrade within a month causing no interruptions to users. The update was managed by Enterprise System Engineer Steven Stewart and Manager of System Infrastructure Services Ryan D. Key.

During this process, OIT worked with Dell Technologies to replace two Dell Compellent Storage arrays that were cost prohibitive from a maintenance and support perspective, to keep them under warranty.

The storage arrays are located in the John Peace Library’s (JPL’s) Data Center at the UTSA Main Campus and in the Frio Street Data Center at the Downtown Campus. The array located at the Downtown Campus is used to store copies of the virtual servers for disaster recovery purposes.

“What was eye-opening was how little physical space the new storage arrays required. It was one thing to see it on paper but entirely different when you saw the finished racked solution,” Key stated. “The old array in the JPL took a rack and a half of disks, the new array only takes a quarter of one rack!”

Stewart also stated how “the new Compellent floor space reduced the power and cooling requirements by over three quarters.”

A brand new Dell Compellent Storage array was also implemented for Shamu, UTSA’s high-performance computational cluster. The cluster is maintained by OIT’s Research Computing Support Group and currently manages data for over 300 users. With the implementation of the new storage arrays, OIT has doubled the amount of storage capacity available to support the university’s virtual server and research needs.
The Office of Information Security (OIS) and the Office of Information Technology (OIT) supported National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM). This annual campaign is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to increase awareness about cybersecurity worldwide. Throughout the month participants are educated on potential threats and provided the tools and resources needed to stay safe while online.

OIS is committed to protecting data, systems, and information, as well as educating the UTSA community about various beneficial methods of cyber protection that are generally quick and easy. Cyber threats have varying agendas all of which include gaining access to the university’s data and network resources and your personal information. The threats come from single actors, criminal organizations, and nation states. However, by building the UTSA community’s cyber awareness, we can help prevent cyber-attacks.

Throughout the month, OIT provided cyber security training and marketed useful cyber security tips to help keep the university safe. OIT’s Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team tabled at the UTSA Main Campus in the University Center to help increase the awareness of cyber threats and educate UTSA students, faculty and staff on the proper practices to avoid threats. CRCT posted security tips on social media and are available always to answer any questions users have about protecting their personal information online.

The promotion of NCSAM was performed weekly by the following CRCT Staff:
• Communications Specialist Dalinda Milne
• Multimedia Designer III Yuri Martinez Ramos
• Webmaster Danica Steele
• Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong
• Communications Specialist Nicole Duff
• Communications Specialist Kelsey Evans

“Since 2004, the nation has observed National Cyber Security Awareness Month in October,” said Information Security Officer Kevin Kjosa. “All of us have a role to play in protecting our systems and our data from cyber-attacks. Cyber security is a shared responsibility to protect ourselves, our university and our nation.”

OIT encourages all UTSA faculty, staff, and students to take part in protecting themselves and the university’s data. Information Security is everyone’s responsibility! You can do your part with these simple steps to counter the threats we face and to help ensure your systems and your data remain safe:
• Be wary of emails from those you don’t know or trust.
• Avoid using your myUTSA ID for anything other than valid UTSA services.
• Use backup services for all your files.
• Keep malware off of your computer and make sure your online activity is encrypted.
Deputy CIO Serves as Panelist at SINC Central IT Leaders Forum

Interim Executive Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO for Information Technology Anthony Espinoza served as one of the panelists at the Central IT Leaders Forum hosted by the Strategic Information Networking Conferences (SINC). The event was held from October 8th – 10th at the Grand Hyatt Lost Pines in Austin, Texas.

The SINC Central IT Leaders Forum unites more than 60 IT executives from across central North America for in-depth discussions about resource challenges faced by attendees. The two-day event features presentations, open-discussion group meetings and networking opportunities. This year’s forum boasted IT leaders from several well-known organizations and institutions including Omni Hotels and Resorts, BBVA Compass, and Creighton University.

Espinoza, who represented the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) at this year’s event, served on a four-member panel also comprised of:

- Isaac Sacolick, cio at StarCIO.
- Matt Singleton, chief operations and accountability officer at the Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES).
- Ross Tucker, cio at Texas United Management (TUM) Corporation.

Their panel discussion entitled “Digital Transformation Fireside Chat” provided attendees insights into ways to effectively show the value that digital transformation has on various organizations. In addition, their panel presentation explored challenges that arise from attempting to get leadership to see the merit of certain projects.

“I was honored to be selected to serve on the panel,” said Espinoza. “It truly demonstrates the innovative initiatives occurring at UTSA.”

Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

“Thank you so much for making Unifying Mobility 2016 a huge success! Your presentation ratings were excellent!!
Again, we at DubLabs are very appreciative that you took the extra time out of your schedule to prepare and agreed to be one of our presenters.
Great job and thank you!”

Submitted by: Tony Orlando
Chief Executive Officer, DubLabs

Director of Learning Technologies Joe Tobares and Manager of AV Network Engineering Services Casey Sisco

“I hope all is well … and you have all recovered from hosting such a successful CCUMC event. Not only was the venue a perfect location, but the technology implemented to support the Conference was also very impressive. I’m glad that the CCUMC community was able to see how well the UTSA staff can support Professional Audio Visual integration at a very high level.

I feel very fortunate to have seen the Team grow. [OIT Learning Technologies] has always been a great example of how higher education institutions can support IT / AV integration at such professional and technical levels. In essence you are the perfect model for institutions who are looking to bring IT / AV integration in-house and should collectively be proud of your combined efforts.”

Submitted by: Anthony Del Toro
Education Accounts Specialist, Extron Electronics
UTSA staff shares academic advising best practices at NACADA annual conference

October 11 | St Louis, MO

Mentions: Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

Article by: UTSA Today

UTSAtoday.com

October 11 | St Louis, MO

UTSA staff shares academic advising best practices at NACADA annual conference

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Mentions: Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

Article by: UTSA Today

UTSAtoday.com

Executive Director of Academic Advising Barbara Smith, Advising Director Cynthia Rodriguez, and Academic Advisors Betsy (Elizabeth) Haddad and Margaret Garcia will present at the conference to share their experiences and best practices in adopting new industry tools to improve the advising experience.

Smith will present a session titled, “Survey Says: How to Become a Better Advisor,” with colleagues from Texas A&M and Blinn College. Rodriguez, Haddad and Garcia will concurrently present their poster, “Exploring Innovative Approaches to Academic Advising: How Utilizing Web Based Applications Has Influenced Student Success,” at the conference.

Both presentations will explore the successes, challenges and milestones the university has achieved with the support of its Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant, funding awarded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to encourage the design of new approaches, the navigation transformative change and pursue better results for students.

Vanessa Hammler Kenon, assistant vice provost for Information Technology and principal investigator for UTSA’s iPASS grant, will also attend the conference to share experiences about the launch of new advising technology tools at UTSA.

UTSA was one of 24 institutions selected to receive the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s iPASS grant to support implementation of advising technology. The iPASS project is a joint effort between the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Academic Advising, Institutional Research and the Office of Information Technology. The project initiatives follows three pillars to improve student degree completion rates: educational planning, counseling and coaching, and risk targeting and interventions.

“These advising technologies are enabling the advisors to be more proactive with their students’ caseloads and to follow up with the students before they become at-risk or off course. There are more deliberate and intentional appointment campaigns and outreaches ensuring students know their options and can make informed decisions,” said Smith.

UTSA’s trip to NACADA is funded by the New Media Consortium with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
Bryan Wilson, interim chief information officer and vice provost of Information Technology at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) served as the guest speaker for a CIO Roundtable event on October 18 at UTSA. Ellucian, a leader in higher education student success software and the vendor for DegreeWorks, hosted the event, which united executives from notable institutions across the U.S. to address the theme “Implementing Cloud Solutions.”

During the event, Wilson offered attendees insights into the university’s plan to move DegreeWorks, the degree planning and degree auditing tool and Banner, the student information system, from the university’s infrastructure to the cloud. The cloud, an application hosting service powered by Ellucian, contains state-of-the-art technology through which the advising tool will be maintained and operated.

“The Office of Information Technology (OIT) was at a point where we needed to upgrade our hardware,” said Wilson. “Our philosophy every time we get to a decision point is to investigate our options. After reviewing our options, we realized that although hosting the cloud through Ellucian would cost us a little bit more than in-house, the benefits far outweigh the costs.”

The move to the cloud, therefore, reflects OIT’s commitment to delivering top-tier service with the mobile-first student in mind.

One of the main benefits of the transition is a more robust DegreeWorks user experience for UTSA students and Academic Advising. The cloud will enable Ellucian to monitor the platform around the clock, thereby ensuring optimal performance.

This transition will result in 24/7 access to DegreeWorks to further empower students as they personalize their degree plans with their advisors and ultimately promote use of the platform. As of spring 2017, the university saw an 80 percent adoption rate of the system.

“I think the reliability, and ability to dynamically increase our resources when there are peak times on the server system, is of paramount importance as we cannot afford down time,” Wilson explained. “During those peak periods, Ellucian will provide those computing resources. The system availability and reliability are crucial factors for student success.”

Currently, several higher education institutions including University of Notre Dame, Virginia State University, and Arizona Western College have successfully adopted cloud technology. UTSA will join these and other institutions in moving to the cloud once the migration is complete by spring 2018.

“I am excited to talk about UTSA and what we are doing as it pertains to migrating to the cloud,” said Wilson. “I think UTSA is going to be a leader in having our student information system hosted and I want to share that experience with our peers.”

Along with Wilson’s presentation, the event featured testimonials from current UTSA students, an alum and OIT staff regarding communications and student experiences with DegreeWorks. The event culminated in a tour of the UTSA Main Campus including the VizLab. Attendees were able to network with peers from other institutions and learn about their experiences with cloud migration.

DegreeWorks is one of the student success technologies funded in part by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant.
Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., served as one of the presenters at a CIO Roundtable event on October 18th. The all-day event, which was hosted by Ellucian, was held in the OIT Learning Studio (BB 3.04.16). It united CIOs from various institutions across the state including Texas A&M University-Central Texas and Lamar University.

The event focused on the theme “Implementing Cloud Solutions,” and was led by Interim Chief Information Officer and Vice Provost for Information Technology Bryan Wilson who served as the guest speaker. Wilson discussed UTSA’s plans to migrate the degree planning and degree auditing tool DegreeWorks and the student information system (SIS) Banner to the cloud.

During her presentation, entitled “Building Great Student Success Tools and Innovative Marketing so Students will Use Them!”, Dr. Kenon discussed various marketing approaches that OIT utilized throughout the last year to raise students’ awareness and usage of the interactive degree planning and auditing tool DegreeWorks.

Her presentation also featured testimonials from a student panel of OIT staff and student-workers, comprised of past and current UTSA students regarding their experiences with DegreeWorks:

- Sam Barrera, technology support specialist I
- Edgar Guajardo, information technology assistant
- Nestor De Hoyos, student assistant I
- Carlos Rodriguez, technology support specialist II
- Estevan Sanchez-Rodriguez, student assistant I

In addition to Dr. Kenon’s presentation, Jeff Ralyea, senior vice president and general manager of Cloud at Ellucian and Eric Shultz, account manager at Amazon Web Services also presented at the event.

Implemented in part by the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant, DegreeWorks is one of the technologies utilized by Academic Advising to foster student success.
The UTSA community was invited to join the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) in partnership with the Campus Technology Store and Dell on board the Destination Dell Technology Tour bus near the Sombrilla Plaza on the UTSA Main Campus on Thursday, October 19th from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The tour bus provides students, faculty and staff with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with some of the latest technologies designed to increase collaboration and productivity.

Destination Dell is an RV decked out with the Austin skyline that travels to 40 cities on the West Coast. UTSA is the only site in San Antonio that has been approved for Destination Dell, which has rolled into other institutions and companies across the U.S. such as the University of Texas at Austin, Rutgers University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“I am truly excited that UTSA has been selected as the San Antonio site for Destination Dell,” said Brent League, director of the Research Computing Support Group. “Dell is not just a company we purchase computer equipment from, they are a partner with UTSA and this is just one example of how their partnership brings value to UTSA.”

To help prepare the UTSA community for the ever-changing workforce, OIT entered into this partnership to offer Roadrunners a first-hand look into how technologies will help shape the workplace of the future.

Some of the Dell products that were displayed inside the interactive tour bus include the latest laptops, desktops, monitors with touchscreen displays, and workstations from the Precision line.

In addition, the tour bus showcases a mobile conference room equipped with Intel Unite, an innovative software designed to transform meetings. Through this software, users can wirelessly present information, share screens, and annotate during meetings to better foster collaboration.

Staff from several OIT areas including StudentConnect, the Research Computing Support Group and the Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team were available, along with Dell experts, to engage attendees in a discussion about how these products will help transform the future workplace.

In addition, staff from OIT and the Campus Technology Store will set up information tables to increase the UTSA community’s awareness of the products and services available to promote success and to provide them with complimentary gear.

“Having an opportunity to actually get our hands on Dell products is a huge benefit to the UTSA community,” said Linda Dunn, director of Student Computing Services. “Dell is a key player in the market, and seeing what products are accessible and having Dell on-hand to answer questions is a great way to decide if Dell’s offering is right for what the UTSA community may be looking for.”

The event was organized and coordinated by the OIT CRCT and Business Office Administration (BOA) teams.
Director of Customer Service and Operations Support
Ben Garcia and Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology Vanessa Hammel Kenon, Ed.D., served as co-presenters for a break out session at this year’s San Antonio IT Symposium. The session was held on October 19th from 2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in downtown, San Antonio.

Entitled “Getting Serious about Social Media – It’s More Than Meme’s and Marketing,” the session provided attendees insights into how social media can be used as an effective tool to reach customers.

The San Antonio IT Symposium attracts IT executives from across the region for a series of interactive break out sessions as well as networking opportunities. Along with serving as a presenter at this year’s symposium, Garcia is also a member of the advisory board for the San Antonio IT Symposium, a position which he has held since 2015.

Ben Garcia at the San Antonio IT Symposium.

Vanessa Hammel Kenon, Ed.D., and Ben Garcia serve as co-presenters at the San Antonio IT Symposium.

Tech Support II Team Lead Carlos Rodriguez

“Carlos provided excellent service in getting my computer systems up and running when I arrived [at UTSA].”

Submitted by: Gerald Lewis
Associate Vice President of Public Safety and Chief of Police

Enterprise Research Solution Engineer Jeremy Mann

“Please let Jeremy know that the Briscoe Middle School (and all students who go through the ViLab) thought it was awesome! I will share some of the evaluation results and pictures from the Dreamrunner groups who came by the ViLab this past Fall over the holiday break. Thanks again!”

Submitted by: Lara Crouch, M. Ed.
Senior Program Coordinator
Institute for P-20 Initiatives
As the frontline of customer support for UTSA, the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Customer Service and Operations Support area works diligently to ensure the smooth running of the technology used by the UTSA community. Comprised of three distinct teams: OITConnect, Academic Support, and StudentConnect, the Customer Service and Operations team holds a common goal of providing customer-centric IT support to the UTSA community.

The first of these teams functions as the branded service known as OITConnect. OITConnect serves as the general technical support for all UTSA faculty, staff and students on all campuses. On any given day, OITConnect technicians work remotely and in the field to resolve technical issues by fixing system outages, troubleshooting devices, imaging and reimaging computers, facilitating passphrase resets, and fulfilling IT access requests, among other tasks.

Customers are offered multiple customer support channels through which they can request and receive assistance, such as:

- Email.
- Phone support through its IT call center.
- A self-service portal.
- A walk-up Help Desk in the Bosque Building (2nd floor).
- Live chat on the OIT website.

Some of the student-workers from the OITConnect team attending to customers.

Lane Helm assists a customer at the OITConnect Help Desk.

OIT also provides dedicated IT support to the College of Science (COS) and the College of Liberal and Fine Arts (COLFA) through its Academic Support team. This team regularly collaborates with its designated colleges to fulfill service requests and partner with their Information Technology Associates (ITAs).

The OIT Academic Support team works with each college to facilitate improved InSight indicator scores and to provide consultation services. This team serves as a customer liaison for the fulfillment of college IT requests and has a long-term goal of eventually expanding its service to all colleges.

In addition, OIT introduced a new customer support channel to serve the UTSA students last year – StudentConnect. StudentConnect offers onsite technical support for students’ personal devices via its student-dedicated help desk and through a more contemporary means - social media.

“In everything we do, our goal is to first think about our customers and their needs,” said Ben Garcia, director of Customer Service and Operations Support. “This fosters the need for greater collaboration when we speak to customers to truly understand the customer experience.”

Their commitment to providing top-tier customer support to UTSA has resulted in the team achieving a 93% customer satisfaction rate in 2016. According to Garcia, the customer support rating is trending right below 97% customer satisfaction for 2017 based on surveys customers respond to following the resolution or completion of a ticket.

To further provide continued top-tier customer support to the UTSA community, OIT is currently streamlining its OITConnect Self-Service Portal to ensure that it is more user-friendly and guides users immediately to the request form they need. Additionally, OIT plans to enhance its OITConnect knowledge base to enable customers to receive answers to common technical questions online prior to interacting with a technician.

“From a customer service standpoint, I am very proud of the teams,” said Garcia. “Their efforts to achieve these marks is just a testament to the continuous work that they do for continuous improvement.”

Department Spotlight: OIT Customer Service and Operations Support

October 28 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Ben Garcia

Link(s)
http://oitconnect.utsa.edu
https://www.utsa.edu/oit/studentservices

Some of the student-workers from the OITConnect team attending to customers.

A visual representation of the Customer Service and Operations Support teams.
The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant was one of a few selected institutions chosen by Achieving the Dream (ATD) to share their experience with implementing advising technology in an effort to develop a communication toolkit for student support initiative.

The UTSA iPASS grant, which is supported by the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team, was selected from among the 26 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) iPASS grantees. UTSA is an iPASS grantee institution and the project is a collaboration between UTSA’s Office of the Provost, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and OIT. The iPASS grant supports student support initiatives at UTSA including the Coordinated and Linked Approaches to Student Success (CLASS) and the new President’s Initiative on Student Success.

Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammaker Kenon, Ed.D., serves as the principal investigator (PI) for the UTSA iPASS grant. The CRCT team including Project Coordinator and iPASS Grant Project Lead Rosalind Ong, Communications Specialists Nicole Duff and Diancia Steele, Multimedia Specialist Yuri Martinez Ramos, and Webmaster Dalinda Milne have supported student success through the promotion of academic advising technology tools including DegreeWorks, the Education Advisory Board (EAB) Student Success Collaborative – Campus (SSC-Campus), UTSA GUIDE, and the UTSA Mobile App.

ATD is a national network of colleges working toward closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success. It has published the Integrated Student Support Redesign: A Toolkit for Redesigned Advising and Student Services to Effectively Support Every Student. The toolkit creation was a joint effort of several organizations including EDUCAUSE, the rpkGROUP, Tyton Partners, and the Community College Research Center (CRRC), and iPASS grantee institutions.

UTSA is featured in the chapter Crafting a Communication Strategy. The communication planning campaign executed by the OIT CRCT team to market DegreeWorks (a degree auditing tool) is highlighted as a key to its successful relaunch and adoption.

ATD created the toolkit, which contains the experiences of multiple iPASS institutions who have implemented innovative initiatives to increase student access and success. The toolkit provides evidence-based, practitioner-tested tools that can help support other institutions throughout each phase of their journey as they embark on a student success redesign.
The Office of Information Technology Engages in EDUCAUSE Conference

October 31 - November 3 | Philadelphia, PA

Mentions:
Rosalind Ong and Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

The UTSA Office of Information Technology staff including Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong presented at the 2017 EDUCAUSE conference. The conference was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from October 31 to November 3, 2017. Below are highlights of the events that the OIT team participated in during the 2017 EDUCAUSE Conference.

Dr. Kenon served as a panelist for the EDUCAUSE 2018 Top 10 IT Issues feature session. This session provided attendees the opportunity to hear strategic directions to share with their institutional leadership from a panel of IT leaders on the top 10 IT issues identified for 2018. The top 10 list will officially be published in January, for more stories on the EDUCAUSE 2018 Top 10 IT Issues, visit the following digital magazines: EdTech, ECampusNews, and EdScoop.

In addition to the EDUCAUSE 2018 Top 10 IT Issues session, Dr. Kenon filmed an EDUCAUSE video interview to promote the release of IT issues list including student success.

- During the DubLabs Unifying Mobility conference, a preconference event to the EDUCAUSE conference, Dr. Kenon presented, sharing insights of how mobile applications, such as the UTSA Mobile App, support student success.
- During the conference, Dr. Kenon, iPASS grant principal investigator and Ong, iPASS grant project lead participated in the iPASS convening and were part of a special poster session reception attended by the Diana G. Oblinger Innovation Forum CIO participants. They also had a second poster session the following day in the EDUCAUSE Vendor Exhibit Hall.
- Ong was invited to join the Education Community Advisory Group and represent the UTSA iPASS team at a special summit, Leading the Movement, sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The session focused on shaping the development of a shared education platform for networked collaboration.
- While at the conference, Dr. Kenon and Ong were also able to participate in the New Media Consortium (NMC) Scaling Solutions Toolkit special invitation workshop, which reviewed the toolkit released in summer of 2017. Dr. Kenon had a role in designing the toolkit during a previous the Online Learning Consortium International Conference with the NMC.
- Dr. Kenon was invited to join the EDUCAUSE 2018 Annual Conference Program Committee to help plan next year’s conference. For her role on the committee, she participated in sessions that provided an ‘orientation before participating in a design-thinking workshop in preparation for their role in shaping the member-driven content and experiences for the conference (EDUCAUSE.com)” The 2018 EDUCAUSE conference will be held in Denver, Colorado.

The EDUCAUSE Annual Conference hosts professionals and technology providers from around the world to enable them to network, share ideas, and discover solutions to today’s challenges.
Assistant Vice Provost for IT Serves as Panelist at DubLabs Unifying Mobility 2017 Conference

October 31 | Philadelphia, PA
Mentions:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

Assistant Vice Provost for the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., along with Director of Enterprise Applications at the Moody Bible Institute John Sauceda, served as a panelist at the 2017 Unifying Mobility conference. The event was hosted by DubLabs, the vendor for the UTSA Mobile App, and was held on October 31st at the Le Meridien Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

During their panel, Dr. Kenon and Sauceda presented on the topic “Mobile Marketing: Why Usage Matters and Round Table on Best Practices.” Their presentation examined different marketing approaches used at their respective institutions to appeal to students in an effort to encourage them to download and utilize the mobile app.

Dr. Kenon discussed several strategies utilized by OIT including elevator posters, digital signage and bookmarks to raise students’ awareness about some of the features of the app.

The UTSA Mobile App contains a variety of features aimed at enhancing the academic and social experience of Roadrunners. The app enables students to view course schedules, campus dining hours and locations and more and is available at no cost.

“This is my second year presenting for DubLabs at EDUCAUSE,” said Dr. Kenon. “It was exciting to see the number of IT Executives attending increase as the issues around mobility continue to increase in importance.”
Shamu Helps UTSA Faculty, Staff and Students Accelerate Research Projects

November 1 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions:
Brent League and Zhiwei Wang

Since its latest update in summer 2017, UTSA’s centrally shared high-performance computing (HPC) cluster Shamu, has helped a significant amount of faculty, staff, and students accelerate the completion of their research projects. The update resulted in an enhancement that has benefitted users with better data transfer rates, and increased disk performance and capacity.

Throughout fall 2017, Shamu has improved the performance level of both the Bexar County Story Map and Password Cracking projects.

Bexar County Story Map

In October 2016, UTSA’s Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) and Department of History received a grant for the Bexar County Story Map Project. The project is designed to produce a series of web maps and applications that present the history of Bexar County from prehistory until 1821. To help make the history lesson more fun, CAR created 3D historical objects to allow viewers to see how the item actually looked as opposed to a photograph.

The project lead is John Reynolds, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of History, who partnered with Research Scientist I Clinton McKenzie and Research Data Analyst Jessica Nowlin, Ph.D., within the UTSA Center of Archaeological Research team. Throughout the project, the team selected five different prehistoric sites to tell the history of Bexar County from when the Europeans arrived. There are many different concepts in this project including prehistoric people, how land was allotted over time, when Europeans first settled in San Antonio, and much more.

“This project is a much more accessible way for the general public to get into the history. It’s literally right at their doorstep” said Nowlin. “I think it’s really beneficial for UTSA to be involved because we are the biggest university in the county, so we should be included in trying to help the residents understand the history.”

During the project, the team used Agisoft PhotoScan to help create the 3D images. The software takes 150 photos of an object and analyzes the common points between all of the photos to construct a 3D model of the artifact. After the pictures are taken, there is a minimum of 40,000 points per model the computer calculates. Before using Shamu, this process would take up to three days to complete. However, Shamu was capable of achieving the process within hours, helping the team reach their deadline of October 2017.

“Working with the Research Computing Support Group was fantastic,” said Nowlin. “I really appreciate that Zhiwei Wang came over to provide a walkthrough of the basic steps for using Shamu during this project.”

Password Cracking Project

In fall 2017, UTSA graduate student Gary Miller completed a research project using both Linux and Windows systems to develop a better understanding of how hackers crack passwords. The professor provided the class with a combination of eight hashes, a function that allows users to map arbitrarily, for both Windows and Linux systems.

During the project, Miller decided to use Hashcat, one of the fastest and advanced password recovery tools. While using his personal device, the tool provided a rate of 17,108 hashes per second which is equivalent to about 17,000 password applicants a second. Despite the speed, Miller found himself having to wait hours for the results of cracked passwords on his desktop.

After hearing of Shamu and its Graphical Processing Units (GPU), Miller decided to take advantage of the system and run the Linux on Shamu. It was then that he discovered his previous results of 17,000 hashes per second increased to 17 million password candidates per second. Seeing that Shamu generated results 1,000 times faster, he decided to use Shamu as his primary source for the remaining research.

“Not all applications are able to take advantage of GPU processing power, but more and more applications and code are being developed that can take advantage of it,” said Brent League, director of the Research Computing Support Group. “GPUs come in handy when you have large batches of jobs that need to do the same task over and over, which is exactly what Gary’s experiment was doing and why Shamu’s GPU nodes helped him succeed much quicker than he could have on a typical computer.”

At the end of the project, Miller managed to crack all passwords and stated that Shamu was a big help and provided him with extra time to try different types of attacks.

“Some of my classmates were struggling to find the time to let their desktop run. They had to run it for three hours to crack only a few passwords,” said Miller. “I completed all of mine in 45 minutes with Shamu and was given the time to experiment using different types of attempts.”
Deputy CIO Serves on Panel for Tuition and Fee Student Forum

November 13 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Anthony Espinoza

Interim Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO of the UTSA Office of Information Technology Anthony Espinoza served as a panelist at the UTSA Tuition and Fee Student forum. The event, which was open to the public, was held on November 13th in the Retama Auditorium (UC 2.02.02) from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

As one of three Tuition and Fee Proposal Committee Meetings, the Student Forum enabled students and stakeholders from various areas across the university to discuss the proposed tuition and fee increases. Input from the university community would be used to help create a proposal to determine the rates for fees not set by the Texas Legislature. The forum explored topics such as parking, and the Automated Services and Computer Access Charge.

Espinoza was present to answer potential questions about the latter topic, which is a charge assigned to all registered students. This charge subsidizes the costs associated with the upkeep and operations of the infrastructure, electronic and online services of the university.

The panel, which was moderated by Associate Vice Provost of Financial Affairs Lenora Chapman, also consisted of other representatives from across the university including:

- Taylor Eighmy, Ph.D., UTSA president
- Erika Cox, director of Student Enrollment Services
- Diana Martinez, director of Scholarships
- Clay Haverland, assistant vice provost of Campus Services,
- Gerard Sanders, dean of the College of Business
- Jackie Hobson, director of Student Affairs Budget and Financial Services
- JoAnn Browning, Ph.D. P.E., dean of Engineering
- Nicholas Liegl, senior associate athletics director for Business and Finance

“I am thankful for the opportunity to serve our students and support the university’s goals,” said Espinoza.

UTSA Office of Information Technology Receives Feedback from the Student Government Association (SGA)

November 14 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Anthony Espinoza

Early fall 2017, the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) collaborated with the UTSA Student Government Association (SGA) to create a focus group. Comprised of SGA representatives and members of OIT leadership and staff, this focus group was initially designed as a forum to garner student feedback on the UTSA Mobile App.

The UTSA Mobile App, which was developed by the OIT Application Development and Support (ADS) team, along with its vendor DubLabs, contains different features to enhance the academic and social experience of Roadrunners. It enables users to view course information, campus dining hours and locations, even find their way around campus via its built-in map and more.

To ensure the optimal user-experience, particularly for the mobile-first student, OIT formed this focus group as a direct channel to hear from UTSA student body representatives about how the app could be improved to further engage students and add value to their college experience.

“The feedback received has been very eye-opening not only for myself but also a lot of OIT staff,” said Anthony Espinoza, interim director of infrastructure services and deputy CIO. “This is particularly helpful for the developers who code the app.”

The feedback received thus far has led the ADS team and DubLabs to upgrade the app, making it more modernized and customizable and therefore, more appealing especially for our student population.

“We have already changed the user interface based on the feedback, and we are making modifications to other features as suggested,” said Espinoza. “Our goal is to make the app more usable for our students.”

Over the course of its time, the SGA focus group, which convenes on a monthly basis, has expanded its scope to focus on OIT’s technology offerings in general. SGA members provide feedback on other OIT products and services such as AirRowdy, PrintSpot, StudentConnect and the charging towers.

In addition, they learn from OIT managers about how these resources are conveniently accessible to help foster productivity, collaboration, and success and are available to students at no additional cost.

“The opportunity to provide feedback allows us to have a say in the quality of the technological infrastructure that is provided from OIT,” said Marcus Thomas, president of SGA. “This, in turn, plays an essential role in Roadrunners’ education.”
Director of Video Production Ernest Hernandez III and Senior Producer James Borrego from the UTSA Office of Information Technology represented the university during the 2017 San Antonio Entrepreneurship Week (SAEW). The conference took place from November 13-17 and was hosted at 11 different locations within the city of San Antonio.

SAEW is a five-day showcase that highlights the entrepreneurs and businesses that are making a difference in the San Antonio Community. Throughout the week, over 80 speakers from various organizations collaborate on innovative ideas, existing partnerships, deal flows, and much more.

Hernandez served as a speaker on November 16 at the San Antonio College location for the “Taking the Risk in San Antonio: Video Writing, Pre-Production, and Production” session. During the sitting, Hernandez and five other speakers collaborated on different routines and the technology involved in digital editing, live streaming, and broadcasting within video production.

“It was great to see UTSA included in the conversation, “said Hernandez. “I can imagine the UTSA Downtown campus being a major influencer for this conference next year.”

In addition, Hernandez also presented during the “Digital Workstations and Watch Instantly Platforms: Video for Television and Online Post-Production and Distribution” session. Throughout the session, the speakers discussed evolving strategies when using video editing software and exporting it with technology hardware such as social media, Netflix, or websites.

Borrego also served as a speaker at the San Antonio College location on November 16. During the “The Write and Capture Storytelling Mission: Film and Episodic Treatments, Location, and Production” session. Borrego collaborated with four other speakers about the different design procedures, software, and hardware technology involved in video production.

“Anytime you can share with colleagues outside of the educational environment, in a panel discussion, the many different approaches and processes that facilitate the creation of a product such as a video, it is very satisfying,” said Borrego. “We also gain a new understanding of how other producers are going about creating and can discern whether our approaches are effective or get new ideas of how to approach a project.”

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Interim Director of Infrastructure Services and Deputy CIO Anthony Espinoza has been selected to lead the Planning Committee for the North San Antonio Chamber 2018 CIO Breakfast Series. A planning committee meeting was held on November 16th and was hosted by CyrusOne, a data center located in San Antonio.

During the meeting, Espinoza along with other executives discussed possible topics that would be explored at the 10 CIO breakfast sessions, which would be held in the coming year. The team initially received 16 suggestions, which were then narrowed down to 10. Some of the topic ideas for the 2018 series will include:

• Lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey
• Block chain
• Artificial Intelligence
• Machine Learning
• Holistic IT Leadership
• Digital Disruption and Transformation

The North SA Chamber CIO Breakfast Series is held on a monthly basis and is open to executives and leaders in the information technology field. The series features presentations from guest speakers regarding current technology issues. It enables participants to network, and exchange ideas with their counterparts.

“I was honored to have been selected to lead the planning committee for the 2018 CIO Breakfast series,” said Espinoza. “I look forward to chairing the 2018 CIO series and representing UTSA in the local community as an institution of excellence.”
Seven colleges at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) have received a boost to help students succeed. The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) awarded approximately $150,000 in grants to the colleges through its Academic Support Solutions Fund. The awards, which range from $5,000 to $15,000, will help subsidize the costs of initiatives to empower student success at the Main and Downtown Campuses.

The OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund is maintained by the Automated Services and Student Access charge and is designed to provide UTSA colleges with financial assistance for projects aimed at improving student life at the university. This mandatory student fee helps ensure the upkeep of the technology infrastructure and electronic resources.

Last summer, OIT extended a call for proposals (CFPs) by way of its Faculty Advisory Committee. The committee members distributed the CFPs throughout their respective colleges to provide interested faculty and staff an opportunity to receive support for student-centered projects that aligned with at least one of the themes outlined in the UTSA strategic plan.

“‘This is our second year utilizing a call for proposals process,’” said Vanessa Hammler Kenon, assistant vice provost for Information Technology. “‘We are always happy to assist in whatever way possible to ensure UTSA students succeed.’”

OIT received more than 20 proposals from several departments, nearly doubling the number of proposals submitted last year and reflecting OIT’s effort to increase faculty collaboration. Out of the proposals submitted, 15 were selected to receive funding, based on a unanimous decision of the Faculty Advisory sub-committee.

“I continue to be amazed at the knowledge base of our UTSA students,” said Kenon. “The insight they bring to the process when they sit down with OIT staff to review the proposals is remarkable.”

In addition to providing students with cutting-edge technology, the awarded projects will further equip them with the technological, critical thinking skills and experiential learning needed to succeed.

Some of the awarded projects will enable UTSA students to gain experience in mobile app creation and familiarize them with innovative technology such as smartboards and drawing tablets, which are widely utilized at peer institutions and in today’s workforce.

“I think it is a great idea to make these funds available for small student-focused projects which support UTSA’s vision,” said Dan Smolenski, UTSA computer science computing manager. “The OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund is a good way for the faculty and staff that work closely with students and know their needs to get projects funded, which directly supports the students. This in-turn helps to increase our retention and graduation rates.”

The seven colleges and their awarded projects include:

**College of Architecture, Construction, and Planning**
- “Building Performance Measurement and Multi-Layer Mixed-Reality Visualization Equipment”

**College of Business**
- “Return on Student Investment”

**College of Education and Human Development**
- “Mobile Apps: Acquiring the Skills and Dispositions for 21st Century Learning and Teaching”

**College of Engineering**
- “Development of Technological Corrosion and Materials Test Site for Student Advancement”
- “Advancing Computing Resources for Deep Learning Education and Research in Brain Computer Interface”

**College of Liberal and Fine Arts**
- “Psychology Doctoral Computing Resources Refresh”
- “UTSA Goes UN: Empowering Our Students to Become Global Citizen”
- “Upgrading Technology in the Graduate Anthropology Lab: Part 2”
- “Developing a Digital Studio by Increasing the Availability of Interactive Technology (Smart Boards, Drawing Tablets, Software) to Prioritize Student Marketability”
- “Expansive Possibilities: Exploring the Digital Humanities through The Black Speculative Arts Digital Archive”

**College of Public Policy**
- “Upgrading Computing Infrastructure for Public Policy Excellence”

**College of Sciences**
- “Testbed for Unix and Network Security Research and Education”
- “Enhancing the Academic Experience for Environmental Science Majors at UT San Antonio through the Upgrading of the GIS, Environmental Statistics, and Environmental Assessment Computer Classroom”
- “System Support for Education and Research in Big-Data Application with Non-CPU Devices”
- “Security Course Virtualization”
Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia is serving on the 2017-2018 Leadership UTSA team. As the only representative from OIT nominated to serve this two-year term, Garcia, along with faculty and staff from across the university, is helping to shape leaders at UTSA.

“It is a huge honor for me to be part of this initiative to foster the development of future leaders at UTSA,” said Garcia. “I think Leadership UTSA is a great program. It is built with a lot of creativity and flexibility for the participants.”

Leadership UTSA is a program through which participants are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to further thrive in their current position. The program is tailored to offer faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds valuable insights regarding leadership and how they can serve UTSA and the higher education community.

The program convenes on a monthly basis and features all-day workshops and mentoring sessions that foster collaboration and educate participants about myriad topics centered on leadership. These include an introduction to leadership styles, strategy, and communications, diversity and inclusion, conflict resolution, and more.

Garcia, who initially served as a participant of the program in 2015, now helps to conduct training exercises for this program. In addition, Chief Information Security Operations Officer from the Office of Information Security (OIS) Kevin Kjosa served as a 2016-2017 participant of the program.

“Basically our job from an onboarding and technology standpoint was to map out the students’ journey from applicant to admitted,” Garcia explained. “We discussed what that journey involves, what students experience and the technologies that are offered at each step.”

The Student Success Task Force is responsible for formulating a plan to assist students prior to their enrollment and post-graduation. EAB and the Student Success Task Force will evaluate information gathered from participants at the event.

“I am honored to have participated,” said Garcia. “I think for OIT it reaffirms the value of what our department strives for in being a partner in collaborating with the entire university community, especially students.”

Similarly, Iyengar participated in a session as part of President Eighmy’s Strategic Enrollment Planning Task Force. The session was entitled “Preparing for Strategic Enrollment Planning at The University of Texas at San Antonio” and was led by representatives from Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL). Iyengar is a member of the task force’s data team.

The event served as a forum for participants to discuss data gathering strategies for various sub-committees. In addition, participants were able to complete a UTSA Strategic Enrollment Planning (SEP) Data Gathering Checklist.

“I, too, am honored to have been invited to be part of the initiative,” said Iyengar. “I look forward to providing the support needed to ensure that right data sources will be used.”

RNL is an organization committed to helping higher education institutions and non-profit organizations manage enrollment and student success.

The Strategic Enrollment Planning Task Force is responsible for creating strategies to help predict the long-term strategic enrollment of the university.
During the fall 2017 semester, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Video Production Group (VPG) and Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) collaborated with Professor in Practice, in the College of Business (COB) Thomas Cannon J.D. Dr. Cannon is currently teaching Destination Marketing, one of the UTSA COB Marketing Sports, Event, and Tourism Management courses (SET). The purpose of this course is to show students how they can develop a successful marketing plan and promote a destination or attraction (i.e. Country, State, and City), in this case, the COB is working with the San Antonio Zoo.

Throughout the course, students performed observational research, where they traveled through the San Antonio Zoo and observed points of contact, reactions, restrooms, gift shops and much more. The students were then asked to create a 30-second video that is engaging and persuades their viewers to visit the destination.

Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III provided the class with an overview of the video production process. The class was also educated on how to create a successful storyboard.

The students created a storyboard that included scenery at the zoo, video angles needed, scripting, and music and time details. Once completed, all storyboards were presented to the San Antonio Zoo’s Vice President of Marketing Brian M. Carter who selected the top videos for VPG to produce at the Zoo.

“The Storyboards the students created were very impressive,” said Hernandez. “I underestimated their creativity and talent and was pleasantly challenged with the ideas presented.”

“An outreach to the community for a non-profit organization is a great way to end the semester,” said Cannon. “It incorporates experimental learning for the students, the venue is fantastic, and the video production group literally provide free videos to the zoo.”

On December 5, the class, VPG, and the Zoo’s marketing team met up with the Director of Research Computing Support Brent League in the UTSA VizLab to share the video clips that the VPG completed at the zoo from the selected storyboards. During this time four students were awarded for their videos and all students are now certified as observation researchers which they can add to their resume.

“This joint collaboration between the COB, the Office of Information Technology, and the San Antonio Zoo is a prime example of how UTSA is engaged in the community and able to provide innovative solutions,” said League. “It is also a perfect example of how the Office of Information Technology collaborates with other colleges and departments on campus to help them succeed with their primary mission, whether it be academics or research.”
Engaging the Institution in Cyber Security

December 18 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Brad Cooper, Danicia Steele, Dalinda Milne, Kelsey Evans, Kevin Kjosa, Nicole Duff, Rosalind Ong and Yuri Martinez Ramos
Author(s):
Danicia Steele and Rosalind Ong

Campaign Strategies for NCSAM and Beyond

At colleges and universities, we are in a unique position — more than reporting breaches and informing our community following them, we have the ability and duty to provide resources to aid in cultivating awareness of threats to reduce cybercrime, a growing threat across the nation. Higher ed institutions are increasingly targeted by cybercriminals to gain access not only to institutional information but also to student, faculty, and staff information.

“Issues related to cybersecurity continue to serve as the number one issue on the EDUCAUSE Top 10 Issues list for 2018. Many CIOs say it is the issue which keeps them up at night and serves as their biggest challenge,” shared Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., assistant vice provost of IT at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and an EDUCAUSE 2018 Top 10 IT Issues committee member.

Each year brings increased incidences of phishing, malware, and viruses targeting institutions. To combat these threats and utilize the important role of IT in higher education, the UTSA Office of Information Security (OIS) and the Office of Information Technology (OIT) created cybersecurity awareness campaigns to use each semester, building on existing resources.

During the month of October, UTSA supported National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM), an annual campaign — sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance — to increase awareness about cybersecurity worldwide. Throughout the month, the UTSA community was educated on potential threats and provided with tools and resources to stay safe online.

Creating a campaign requires dedication from across the IT department. Both OIS and the Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team within OIT promoted the cybersecurity awareness campaign “Don’t Get Hooked” through different marketing channels during NCSAM.

The NCSAM promoting was performed weekly by the following CRCT Staff:

- Communications Specialist Danicia Steele
- Multimedia Designer III Yuri Martinez Ramos
- Webmaster Dalinda Milne
- Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong
- Communications Specialist Nicole Duff
- Communications Specialist Kelsey Evans

UTSA Community Outreach

The CRCT team hosted an informational table on campus throughout the month to help increase the awareness of cyberthreats and educate UTSA students, faculty, and staff on proper practices to avoid them. Participants were rewarded with a “Don’t Get Hooked” T-shirt.

The CRCT team collaborated with student organizations including the UTSA Student Government Association (SGA) to promote an informative video on phishing and how to avoid getting hooked. The video, narrated by the current SGA student body president, has been promoted through multiple social channels, both on and off campus.

All “Don’t Get Hooked” marketing products — including posters, e-mails, videos, and digital signage — were promoted throughout both the UTSA main and downtown campuses to ensure the entire community was engaged.

Training

In support of cybersecurity awareness, OIS offered training to UTSA faculty and staff, “E-mail Phishing Scams: How to Avoid Them,” hosted by Brad Cooper, OIS’s senior information security analyst, which highlighted the different types of phishing attacks, the proper steps to take if users receive a phishing e-mail, and what to do if you’ve been hooked by a phishing scam.

Social Media

The CRCT team posted informational security tips for all social media followers. The weekly tips included polls and quizzes to actively engage followers, as well as relevant hashtags like #CyberAware.

Don’t Get Hooked” campaign – Elevator poster.

UTSA students receive “Don’t Get Hooked” T-shirts for National Cyber Security Awareness.

Screenshot of OIT’s ‘Don’t Get Hooked’ video.

You receive a fraud alert from your bank. The email advises you to click a link to verify your identity. What do you do? #phishing #utsa21

14% Click links to verify
27% Delete email
64% Contact bank directly

6.5 votes • Final results
Beyond NCSAM

We use strategies from the EDUCAUSE Year-Round Campus Security Awareness Campaign to continue our outreach to students, faculty, and staff, which is woven into our ongoing information tables, social media, newsletter, interviews for the student newspaper and student groups, marketing campaigns, department special events, and conferences open to the campus community. NCSAM helps spotlight the importance of cybersecurity each year and further amplifies the year-round effort to expand the knowledge of our community and help them protect themselves from threats.

Working with faculty, staff, and students to cultivate cybersecurity awareness is a continuous process, as cyberthreats are constantly increasing in sophistication. In particular, educating our students about cyberthreats is essential. Building awareness for students starts when students first arrive on campus for orientation and continues through graduation. To empower and arm our community with the knowledge to protect themselves, we continually provide resources, which is essential to maintaining awareness and fostering a commitment to making sure cybersecurity is everyone’s responsibility.

Office of Information Security Vision

“Since 2004, the nation has observed National Cyber Security Awareness Month in October,” noted Kevin Kjosa, UTSA information security operations officer. “All of us have a role to play in protecting our systems and our data from cyberattacks. Cybersecurity is a shared responsibility to protect ourselves, our university, and our nation.”

OIS is committed to protecting data, systems, and information, as well as educating the UTSA community about various beneficial methods of cyberprotection that are generally quick and easy. Cyberthreats have varying agendas, all of which include gaining access to an institution’s data and network resources, as well as the personal information it safeguards. The threats come from single actors, criminal organizations, and nation states. However, by building the UTSA community’s cybersecurity awareness, we can help prevent future cyberattacks.
The 2017 Advising Appreciation Luncheon, hosted by the Associate Vice Provost for Student Success, was held on December 19 at the UTSA main campus. The event provided a venue to reflect on the important work of advising and the improvements over the past year. The gathering included the UTSA advising department, along with staff from multiple areas that have collaborated with them.

Tammy Wyatt, Ph.D., associate vice-provost for student success, recognized several staff members outside of the advising department as Champions for Student Success and Academic Advising. OIT staff were among those recognized for the work supporting the advising department through the partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant. The grant work included the implementation of advising technologies including DegreeWorks, Education Advisory Board's (EAB's) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus), training and professional development opportunities, and collaborating to launch the redesigned UTSA Academic Advising website.

The OIT staff Champions for Student Success and Academic Advising included:

- Assistant Vice Provost for IT and iPASS Principal Investigator Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
- Project Coordinator and iPASS Project Lead Rosalind Ong
- Communications Specialist Nicole Duff
- Application Development and Support Manager Jayashee Iyengar

Mauli Agrawal, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs also spoke at the luncheon, detailing the importance of advising, as well as how changes in the department have led to positive outcomes for students including significant improvements in UTSA graduation rates.

OIT Staff

“With the 35 students in my Destination Marketing course, participating in an experimental project with the San Antonio Zoo, I required each to conduct on-site observational research and to create a 30 second video storyboard for possible use in the Zoo's social media. Your OIT team helped make this outreach/engagement project a success.

Brent League: Early in the semester, Brent allowed my class to meet in the VizLab to discuss the project, Ernest Hernandez to share about storyboard, and to learn about the VizLab’s capabilities. He also scheduled time for a final presentation rehearsal in the VizLab and he was present for the December 5 presentation to our client, Brian Carter, Vice President of Marketing for the Zoo. And, even took some photos. (See attached) Brent was extremely supportive of this outreach project at each step.

Jeremy Mann: He was present during the rehearsal, offered detailed advice on how to stage the presentation from podium placement, creating HD slides and slide to video sequencing. He was very supportive and willing to provide me with anything necessary to make the presentation a success.

Ernest Hernandez: During late summer, prior to finalizing the semester project, I consulted with Ernest about the idea of his team actually shooting “B-Roll” at the Zoo based on part on the students’ storyboards. He not only supported the idea but offered suggestions to enhance it. He met with my students early in the semester, in the VizLab, to explain how best to create a video storyboard and shared video examples; met with the Zoo's team, conducted a pre-shoot site visit and then was present during the shoot. He also made a presentation of the final video clips to both the client and students during the December 5 meeting.

Stephen Matthews: He conducted a site visit to the Zoo, shot the “B-Roll” and even volunteered his twin daughters as talent in a couple of the video clips.

Danicia Steele: She met with Ernest and me to learn more about the class project so she could write an article about this joint effort for an internal OIT online publication.

Yuri Martinez Ramos: He attended the December 5 presentation and photo documented the event then provided links to me for sharing the photos with others.

Bryan, as a faculty member, I sincerely appreciate the attitude and responsiveness of each of your OIT team members. Each is always supportive of my ideas and recommends how best to accomplish them. This is not a “one-off”. Rather, this is a norm that I have experienced.”

Submitted by: Thomas F. Cannon
Professor in Practice
Each month at UTSA, advisors from across campus gather for the All Advising Meeting. The event is akin to a family reunion, with greetings, stories, and genuine care for one another, which is reflective of the institution’s welcoming familial culture. This meeting provides a time for advisors to network, discuss issues, receive training on new initiatives, and share information gathered from conferences to help grow their community. The November 2017 meeting featured presentations from advisors who attended the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Global Community for Academic Advising annual conference in October, where they shared their takeaways from several sessions.

Advising Director Cynthia Rodriguez believes that investing in relevant associations and events can pay dividends for an institution’s advising services. “Attending national conferences is important because this is where best practices can be shared,” Rodriguez said. “As presenters, we not only provide our experiences with others, but we are also afforded the opportunity to connect with colleagues from all over the nation to bring back ideas for more efficient processes.”

Several advisors from UTSA were able to attend this year’s NACADA annual conference, where they presented and moderated sessions. This included Executive Director of Academic Advising Barbara Smith, Director of Academic Advising Cynthia Rodriguez, and Academic Advisors Betsy Haddad and Margaret Garcia, who were selected to represent UTSA at the NACADA event.

The trip was funded by the New Media Consortium (NMC) along with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The UTSA advising team was selected by EDUCAUSE and Achieving the Dream to promote the university’s work as a part of the iPASS grant program via presentations at the NACADA annual conference.
Barbara Smith believes that “providing training and professional development opportunities for academic advisors is critical for them to successfully support their diverse student population and needs. By ensuring academic advisors have opportunities to share their practices and learn from their colleagues at national, regional, state, and institutional levels, we are committing to our students and their success.”

From the advising team’s attendance at the conference, several themes were identified and presented, including:

- **Student coaching**: Advisors reflected on how to provide powerful coaching during their advising sessions. At the center of this conversation was the core concept of posing insightful questions to students and listening to provide both powerful and engaging advising. Students need to be empowered. Exercises to help assess students, such as those that enable them to express themselves and share what might be affecting their academic success, are central to providing students and advisors the tools needed to address issues. Moreover, exercises to coach students toward adopting a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset, assessing and developing grit, and cultivating other skills are also highly impactful.

- **Social justice**: The importance of addressing national and global social justice and race issues continues to grow and affect campuses across the nation. Advisors must remain aware of the histories and current positions of these issues and how they might impact future political and cultural conditions in society. College activism plays a central role in many students’ experiences, and advisors can help guide students to reflect on their experiences inside and outside the classroom.

- **Career services**: As advising continues to transform from leadership to front-desk staff, having the right team in place matters greatly. At the conference, attendees discussed the importance of being intentional when creating and refining job descriptions, as well as corresponding leadership and team-building concepts. They shared insights into the myth that administrators have to know everything and how that perception can be harmful in providing effective career services. Building a team by hiring caring people to do thorough, well-informed work with students at the center is essential to success in this area.

- **Generational communication**: The advising team reflected on the differences between several generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Understanding such differences is critical to connecting with both peers and a diverse student body to provide the most effective advising possible. Each generation can have its preferred communication style and different values that influence decision making. The UTSA Human Resources training team offered training on the topic titled “4 Generations in the Workplace” as a means for further exploration.

- **Sharing best practices**: There was discussion on the importance of not only publishing articles but also reading articles published by peers. The NACADA blog is an avenue by which advisors connect with what others around the globe are doing and spark discussions with one another. The UTSA advising team also will explore an internal platform for sharing information beyond processes between advisors. Resources and discussions on challenges and success stories will enhance staff motivation by displaying the impact of their work.

The UTSA advising team’s presentation topics at NACADA explored the successes, challenges, and milestones achieved in connection to the institution’s IPASS grant and in support of various campus initiatives, such as the Coordinated and Linked Approaches to Student Success (CLASS) and the institutional strategic plan, A Vision for UTSA. As a result of UTSA’s involvement with IPASS, there has been significant transformational change within the culture of advising as well the technology used at the university. Cynthia Rodriguez views her team’s transformation efforts as an exemplar for other institutional advising teams. “We want to be able to be a point of reference to others who may be attempting to implement similar changes in their academic advising.”
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Collaborate - Innovate - Succeed

The University of Texas at San Antonio
Office of Information Technology

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