From the CIO’s Office
by Rusty Waterfield, CIO
Associate Vice President, University Services

I recently spoke with a Tesla service technician as he worked on a car in a University parking lot. It was my first experience seeing a Tesla up close, and the technician took time to describe some of the amazing features of the vehicle. As I walked away, he described the Tesla as a “sweet ride.”

His comment made me think: IT is not a destination, but the vehicle we use to get there. With our IT services, solutions and support, I think ODU has a pretty “sweet ride.” Our innovative thinkers develop effective and efficient vehicles for arriving at University priorities and goals.

Our Identity and Access Management system (MIDAS) and our Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) are great examples of backend systems that position us to be agile in our support of cloud systems and data integration across a variety of systems. We have contributed our expertise in trust and identity to the Internet2 TIER initiative focused on improving the management of access for research and education collaboration across institutions.

Our expertise is also leveraged to support emerging new programs and research excellence at ODU. The ITS infrastructure and security teams were crucial in the design of the infrastructure to support the new Cybersecurity Research and Education Center (CREC).

We are in the final stages of establishing a dedicated network connection between ODU and NSU for researchers to collaborate in the use of cybersecurity resources.

Our GIS team assisted researchers

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TECHNOLOGY:
CYBERSECURITY

The field of cybersecurity is becoming a key area for economic growth in Virginia, which is among the U.S. leaders in cybersecurity research and development. ODU is at the forefront of Virginia’s cybersecurity initiative, serving as a hub for cybersecurity education and research in the classroom, the community and beyond.

In 2015, ODU began bringing together faculty, staff, students, community members and partners to provide a hands-on, multidisciplinary approach to cybersecurity through the Center for Cybersecurity Education and Research. Internationally recognized scholar Hongyi “Michael” Wu, ODU’s first Batten Chair of Cybersecurity, is leading the CCSER in meeting critical needs in research and workforce development that will strengthen Virginia and national economies. Other University-wide cyber-initiatives include:

• A new cybersecurity major, offered through the interdisciplinary studies program
• Formalized agreements with Tidewater Community College and Thomas Nelson Community College, solidifying connections in cybersecurity curriculum and instruction, and making it easier for students to transition to ODU’s cybersecurity major
• Cybersecurity learning communities for first year students, including a dedicated suite in Whitehurst Hall for cyber-interested students who want to live and learn together
• A cybersecurity challenge in the Great Computer Challenge – an annual competition between area K-12 schools which has long included challenges in graphic design, desktop publishing and computer programming

As you might imagine, cybersecurity requires a highly specialized infrastructure that can protect institutional networks and resources while allowing students and researchers to simulate real threats and work on valid solutions. Our desktop support, networking and security groups have worked tirelessly to build and support the particular infrastructure needed in order for ODU to play a leading role in the region’s cyber-arena. Our teams have built:

• A virtual cybersecurity environment inside the Monarch Virtual Environment (MoVE) for summer program exercises
• A cybersecurity virtual environment for HRCyber, a regional workforce development partnership, which will allow students at TNCC and TCC secure access to our labs
• Physical cybersecurity labs (with hosted secure access to the cybersecurity virtual environment) in Kaufman Hall and the Whitehurst Hall Cyber Living-Learning Community
• A Cybersecurity Research Environment (CRE) that allows for robust cybersecurity research to be conducted at ODU (coming soon)
• A physical computer lab inside the same building as the Strome Entrepreneurial Center that will utilize the CRE environment for academic and research projects (coming soon)

“We’ve created an environment within our virtual infrastructure which allows users to connect to a secure and safe environment for performing cyber security exercises and to test their security tools against a target virtual machine,” said Warren Marcelino, lead desktop engineer with ITS. “We have successfully hosted cybersecurity classes, provided access and resources to the Hampton Road Cyber Alliance, and Cyber Security K-12 Boot Camps.”

The ITS teams who maintain these services allow our cybersecurity professionals and ODU students to remain at the forefront of cyber innovation.
NEW ITS TEAM ENHANCES ACADEMIC WEB PRESENCE

The Academic Web Support team, a new group within ITS, collaborates with the University’s many colleges and the University marketing department to develop and maintain websites that align with the mission, priorities and goals of the University. The team of six web content and media specialists was assembled last fall.

“It has been a real pleasure working with the Academic Website Support Program,” said Megan Shearin, director of marketing for the Darden College of Education. “These talented and knowledgeable IT professionals understand that our website is vital to our capacity to communicate effectively with prospective and current students and families. The team is collaborative, responsive and creative. Our College website could not be successful without them.”

This central group – with a combined background in higher education, web content creation, graphic design, marketing and public relations – serves as a resource for colleges who are looking for data-driven analytics and expert guidance in their web marketing efforts.

“This new team allows us to better market our academic offerings at ODU,” said Candice Goodin, assistant director of ITS client services, “as well as provide prompt and reliable customer service.”

The Academic Web Support team is part of a unified client services group, led by Goodin, that focuses on customer service and technology support throughout the University. This group now includes desktop support, help desk support and web support.

The speed at which the Academic Web Support team was assembled, in addition to the agility of its members and results of their efforts, contributed to a Gazelle Award nomination for Goodin (see page 3).

Request help from Academic Web Support at awsp@odu.edu. More information at odu.edu/its/awsp.

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on a rapid assessment study of current and future flood risk exposure of selected structural assets for the Port of Virginia.

Our High Performance Computing team hosted several NSF XSEDE workshops to help researchers at ODU and other Hampton Roads research institutions broaden their use of computational resources.

Our new Academic Web Support team has partnered with several academic units to redesign department and program web pages. They are now working with academic units, Admissions, Career Management and our web development team to redesign academic program pages so they better align with recruitment of prospective students.

Our Business Intelligence (BI) team continues to support enrollment management with data models and reports that strengthen student success initiatives.

And we continue to partner with academic colleges, departments and faculty to support academic excellence and innovation: We’ve integrated the latest technology into the design of classrooms and learning spaces in the new Education Building, provided a solution that tracks and validates graduation documents for the Music program, and continued to offer tools like Box, WebEx and WordPress to complement the Blackboard Learn system.

With over 100 active IT projects, ITS remains busy leveraging IT to support strategic goals and priorities, providing one “sweet ride” for the University.

Software Analysis

New software can be costly and complicated. As more and more software requires the use of sensitive University data, we have developed a review process to help departments navigate software purchases while protecting ODU data and ensuring compatibility with existing technology.

During an initial security review, we’ll look at how University data will be used, seek approval from data owners, and make sure the proper contracts and access controls are in place to protect that data.

We will look at how the software will integrate with our in-house servers, databases, data feeds and existing services. We’ll also help with any licensing questions and business process coordination, and help analyze maintenance costs.

For software analysis, contact the ITS Project Management Office at pmo@odu.edu.
WAYNE JONES: ITS Leader Retires After Storied Career

In April, ITS celebrated the retirement of Wayne Jones, director of information technology infrastructure and operations for 18 years. Good technology works behind the scenes, often unnoticed, providing tools that enable ODU employees and students to do their best work. And in a way, that is also how Jones operated. He was a relationship builder, using his relationships to encourage those he worked with and enhance the services available at ODU.

“If the only person you consult is yourself,” he was fond of saying, “the only thing you’ll learn is what you already know.” He believed in the power of connection. Leveraging his relationships with communication corporations across the state, he led the charge in bringing a 100Gb fiber optic broadband network to ODU, connecting our researchers to the Mid-Atlantic Research Infrastructure Alliance and on to national and international research and education networks like Internet2.

At his retirement celebration in April, Jones challenged his colleagues to remember that technology has the ability to enhance the education of all who come to our campus: It connects first-generation students to new resources and to their families. It provides a common language for international students when language would otherwise be a barrier. And it has the ability to surprise and delight students, making their experience seem all the more valuable and worthwhile.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Gabor Eszes

Gabor has been a middleware and identity developer at ODU for 5 years. He was recently featured in an article highlighting his work with Internet2, a community of research and education organizations working together to develop innovative technology solutions. He was recognized for his work with the Trust and Identity in Education and Research (TIER) initiative.

His work is advancing national efforts to standardize trust and identity infrastructure technologies, and to package a suite of tools that smaller schools can deploy without the benefit of an advanced developer team.

George McLeod

The Port of Virginia awarded a contract to George McLeod and our GIS team, who conducted a study of flood risks at Norfolk International Terminals’ south terminal. They assessed current and future risks to the terminal and its structures, modeling several future sea level rise scenarios which included the impacts of tidal flooding and hurricane storm surge. Their 60-page report was presented to the Port of Virginia in early July.

Vaibhav Dani

Dani, assistant director for database architecture, participated in the inaugural Lion’s Lair entrepreneurial competition. He was recognized as a finalist in the traditional entrepreneurship category for alumni and employees. His submission, EduParadigm, was for a marketplace to democratize education.

Gazelle Award

Candice Goodin, assistant director of client services, won the 2017 Gazelle Award, a peer-nominated award established in 1996 to recognize Administration and Finance employees who consistently provide outstanding service. Candice was selected for her dedication to outstanding customer service at the ITS Help Desk and in all of the areas she manages.

Other ITS employees nominated include Urijta Dani and Mark DeDomenic.

Presentation

Dwayne Smith represented ODU at the national EDUCAUSE conference, presenting a poster titled "The Classroom Lecture Capture Effect," outlining how lecture capture improves student success.

Brian Easton and Mark DeDomenic presented a session at the 2016 Virginia Alliance for Secure Computing and Networking (VASCAN) conference about the implementation of security initiatives during our migration to Office 365.

ODU University Records Manager Mark Walsh presented a paper at the 2017 annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists in Ottawa, challenging his colleagues to improve retrieval of unstructured data on shared drives through content-based file and folder descriptions.


David Kozoyed and Jimmy Patel presented at the Ellucian Live conference earlier this year.

ITS staff members who presented sessions at Virginia’s Association of Collegiate Computing Services (ACCS) annual conference
ITS BY THE NUMBERS

130 Technology classrooms

including

10 new adjustable desks in new education building

10TB data stored in box

40,000+ Footprints Incidents

150,000 email messages

1,000,000 spam messages blocked

2,134 courses completed

11,394 hours of video watched

Lynda.com®
A LINKEDIN COMPANY

65,000 meeting minutes per month in WebEx

160 project requests submitted to project management office

155 projects completed by ITS

10 semi trucks of paperwork stored in one department’s shared drive

ITS employees

All numbers, unless otherwise noted, represent technology use between 7/1/2016 and 6/30/2017