Technology Plans Essay

As technology continues to change the life of our campuses, it is important to investigate what universities are doing to integrate technology into the academic student life. Here are three examples of Strategic Technology Plans from three affluent Universities. These plans are very different from each other, because each institution has a different vision along with a different approach to achieving a 21st century technology-compliant campus. For the purpose of this assignment, I chose to analyze Indiana University’s Strategic Technology Plan, Stanford University’s Strategic Technology Plan, and Salisbury University’s Strategic Technology Plan.

Indiana University (IU) - Strategic Technology Plan

http://www.indiana.edu/~ovpit/strategic/

I chose this plan, which was drawn in 2001, because the site also reports analytics on the solutions implemented by the plan. IU implemented all 68 changes proposed by the plan, using variations of the proposed solutions in order to accommodate specific circumstances.

It clearly transpires from this plan that the information technology (IT) community at IU understands the importance of technology in the classroom and the need to upgrade to a campus that supports such philosophy. The plan comes from the Office of Information Technology and, it does not include references from the Office of the President, which supports the plan. Case in point; the concluding paragraph of this plan is an invitation to all offices on campus to cooperate with IT as they are implementing these changes. To use IT’s words, “Meeting the goal of this plan will require cooperation between virtually all units of the University. Effective cooperation between different units within the University is intrinsically a difficult matter. While there are usually good intentions and good will, these are not enough. Also needed are clear cut statements of mission and, where these overlap, clearly articulated ways to cooperate at their intersection”.

The plan includes the need for a “Solid Foundation of IT Infrastructure & Sound Fiscal Planning” to clarify the functions and monetary responsibilities of this department and the need for more technical personnel. The most important parts of this plan that IT is hoping to affect are as follows: reliable access to computing and to the network throughout campus; to encourage faculty and staff to increase the use of technology for teaching, research, and services; taking a solid role in the worldwide leadership in the use of information technology to facilitate and enhance teaching and learning; and delivering high performance computing and computation in order to develop a national reputation for an outstanding technological campus.

The last recommendation in this plan is that leadership must continue to develop policies and implement procedures that protect the security of IU’s information technology resources and institutional data, safeguard personal privacy, and respect intellectual property rights.

Stanford University - Strategic Technology Plan.

EDCT 661 – Winter 2012
Stanford’s strategic technology plan is very recent and it starts with a quote by the president of the school, John L. Hennessy, where he states “… we want a strategic plan that is visionary, that talks about the way we should be thinking about important information technology to support the core of research and teaching efforts”.

The closing quote is also by the president of the university, who describes the goal of Stanford University as being the commitment to educating students who will affect the world. And, to reach that goal, Stanford will have to build a university that is of the 21st century.

The plan outlines consistent top-down leadership guidance in this strategic plan. The mission and vision statements of this college transpire in every aspect of this report. Starting with the services of their IT department, this plan includes a hierarchical chart that shows the precise direction that IT services will take for this implementation. Proof of this is the clear statement by the IT department that declares that their goal is to help Stanford in the pursuit of becoming a leader in Higher Education.

This technological plan is concerned with reliability, speed and delivery, upgrading the WiFi infrastructure, cloud strategies and solutions that will support research and learning, mobile applications upgrades to ensure technology portability, and the upgrade of more infrastructures that will support technology campus-wide.

There is no reference to efforts for including instructional technology in classrooms. All efforts outlined in this plan concentrate on creating a campus that can offer connection capabilities from every area of the estate. However, these connectivity capabilities will be created for students who desire to use their personal devices on campus and classrooms.

This plan also includes a roadmap that explains in detail deadlines, the approaches, and the priorities that the IT department will adopt during implementation.

Salisbury University -Strategic Technology Plan.
http://www.salisbury.edu/camptech/WebITPlan.html

Lastly, I chose to review this plan because Salisbury University’s strategic technology plan is currently being implemented on campus. Salisbury University opens the plan report by citing four specific goals that IT is trying to accomplish with its investment in this strategic technology plan. This plan shows a clear constructivist philosophy influence, especially in goal number one which states, “Provide and promote a rich technology environment for the creation of digital media for all academic disciplines. Encourage collaboration among students and faculty”. Goals two, three, and four concentrate on retaining students, engaging the students in the classroom to increase their personal growth, and building all the resources that the university needs in order to fulfill these goals.

The recommendations and changes in this plan show a department of technology that is very aware of the role of technology in the life of students, and sees the need to incorporate appropriate innovative tools that will enrich the students’ experience in the classroom.
Their plan includes adding or upgrading the distribution of digital content including film, audio, animations, and other academic content, as well as real time videoconferencing in the classroom and creation of media that will be used for asynchronous learning. The plan continues with the inclusion of “pop technology” such as social media/communications tools, blogs, wikis, and instant messaging tools. And, more direct to educational resources, the creation of a digital library for books, academic material, and eBooks to help control student textbook costs.

Salisbury’s plan also includes upgrades that will help students with portability through mobile technologies such as smart phones, laptops, netbooks, and such devices.

As for the influence of leadership in this plan we can read a clearly stated warning that expresses the importance of working with the four school deans in order to arrive at a successful implementation of these recommendations. The conclusion of this aggressive plan includes a second warning which asserts that, even though the investment that Salisbury has already made to be a top-notch technology campus is great, “the price of not continuing to invest could be even more costly”.

Among these three plans, I would choose Salisbury University’s as a model strategic plan for my school. Salisbury’s plan is the example of a technology plan that will provide and promote a 21st century learning environment enriched with technology where students and faculty will be able to foster learning.