

**2003 - 2004
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
VISION PLAN**

For

**The School of Social Work
The University of Texas at Austin**

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Executive Summary

Social work is a multi-faceted cross discipline profession. Our students need both specialized knowledge and a broad perspective on all issues affecting the human condition. The study of social work requires enormous complex information about people, society, and service. With information technology we can improve the educational experience for both students and faculty by providing better access to content. There are vast information resources available to us. We need the technology and support to incorporate them into curricula and deliver them to students. Our vision is to provide the information and technology necessary for faculty and students by providing the resources for information access and presentation technologies. We seek a learning experience that emphasizes mastery of content and analytical ability. We wish to support faculty and students, making it easy for them to access and use appropriate resources for development and delivery. This requires equipment resources, information resources, and personnel resources.

Small schools face formidable challenges in attaining and maintaining technology resources and support staff necessary to operate at a level consistent with other departments. We can easily exhaust our annual allocation simply providing equipment, software, and maintenance. At current funding, we proceed incrementally into the future, seeking ways to fund existing technology rather than making innovations. This severely impedes our ability to compete with other schools of social work and produce the graduates, research, and products that represent us as a flagship institution. The FCI, CLC, Microsoft agreement and departmental volume pricing have made significant contributions to offset our operating expenses. We look to The University to continue to provide low/no cost software and to assist with needed resources such as a campus-wide wireless solution, increased network security, 508 compliant media production, and faculty/staff training.

We are committed to our students and will continue to utilize our ITAC funds to provide them with the best possible technology and support for education and training. However, we need financial support that goes beyond our current allocation, to upgrade our facility, and provide us with renewable funding for support staff and equipment for ITAC eligible projects, as well as, faculty, staff, administration, and research. Our proposal is to improve our ability to produce and deliver information resources in our classrooms, upgrade our network capacity, and provide life cycle replacement and support for classroom and lab equipment. We have 4 proposals eligible for ITAC funding and one non-eligible.

Proposal (ITAC Eligible)	Cost
IT Classroom and Auditorium IT equipment in 1 classroom and Utopia Theater	\$80,000
IT Classrooms and LRC Life Cycle Funding Life cycle equipment and support	\$91,000
Curricula Development Funding for faculty release time and TA support to develop IT resources for integrated curricula support and assist with 508 mandates	\$60,000
Network Infrastructure Upgrade network connections and Servers	\$25,000
Total ITAC	\$256,000
Proposal (Non-ITAC Eligible)	
Administrative Support Life Cycle Funding Life cycle equipment upgrade for staff and non-tenure faculty	\$25,000
Total Non-ITAC	\$25,000
Total Proposal	\$281,000

ITAC Expenditures and Support Funds

Our annual ITAC allocation is our primary source of IT funds. It is used to maintain our computer lab, IT classrooms, and partially pay for professional staff to oversee the network and overall technology operations. We allocated funds to outfit 2 instructional technology classrooms with the current UT classroom configuration. Implementation is planned for this summer. We replaced 1/3 of the computers in our IT classroom and LRC computer lab as part of our life-cycle plan. We upgraded our network backbone with the purchase of 10/100 Mbps switches and fiber to our building. We enhanced our video production capability with the addition of an iMac workstation, and video production software.

Students pay an IT fee and an LRC fee. The IT fee was used for permanent support staff positions and GRA's. A small portion of the LRC fee also went for GRA's. These positions provide support for curricula development, student projects, IT classrooms, LRC computer lab, Web resources, and network administration. Other support funds for staff came from School accounts. The School also funded two semesters for an AI to assist faculty getting their courses on blackboard.

In previous years about 50% of our ITAC allocation went to support staff. Staff support and life-cycle replacement continue to exhaust our ITAC allocation. Software upgrades and licensing continue to increase our annual recurring costs per workstation. We have no surplus funds for such things as facility upgrades or innovations. We continue to seek some mechanism to provide renewable funding for support staff and life-cycle equipment, as well as, the means to upgrade our facility and support curricula development and innovation.

School of Social Work Vision Plan

Social work is a profession that touches all aspects of the human condition. Our students are trained to work in a variety of settings, needing both a high degree of specialized knowledge and the ability to see the big picture. For example, a case worker in the mental health field may need to incorporate physician, psychologist, and pharmaceutical instructions; family and external support assessments; available community services; federal, state, and local assistance criteria; cultural issues; and a thorough understanding of client needs, wishes, and rights into a coherent work plan. Social workers are called upon to make potential life and death decisions in child and elder abuse, welfare eligibility, drug and alcohol treatment, domestic violence, sexual assault, parole, gang prevention, victims services etc. Still others take knowledge of direct services and apply it to advocacy, community organization, program evaluation, policy analysis, politics, and management.

We must provide complete information support to faculty and students by providing the appropriate resources for development and delivery. This requires equipment resources, information resources, and personnel resources. We will achieve our goal, if we can provide the following:

- Equipment Resources for the development and delivery of information technology;
- Information Resources that are clearly identified or specifically designed to support curricula, enhance student understanding, enhance teaching effectiveness, and promote professional growth, research, and community service;
- Personnel Resources for technical expertise, development, support, and maintenance.

Proposed Projects (ITAC Eligible)

IT Classroom and Auditorium

\$80,000

Faculty and students have consistently asked for improved video projection and computer presentation capabilities in classrooms. For years we have pushed faculty and students to develop and integrate information technology into their course work without being able to provide a platform for them to adequately present it. Our plan is to upgrade our remaining classroom and our auditorium, the Utopia Theater, with IT presentation equipment.

IT Classrooms and LRC Life Cycle Funding

\$ 91,000

This proposal is for funding to maintain our IT classrooms and LRC computer lab so that faculty and students can teach and learn in a first class environment. We are requesting funds for life cycle maintenance, support, and upgrade.

Curricula Development

\$ 60,000

The School recognizes that even with Blackboard and ITS support, that the time and expertise involved in developing curricula materials is often beyond the scope of our faculty. Most faculty are already involved in research, community, and practice endeavors outside of their normal teaching load. Therefore we are requesting funding for faculty release time to develop IT resources for integrated curricula support. In addition to faculty we need funding for TA's to assist faculty in the production of curricula materials, especially with new 508 requirements for Web-based instruction materials.

Network Infrastructure

\$ 25,000

We recently upgraded our network switches to meet our goal of providing 10/100 Mbps service throughout the School. In doing this upgrade we found that some of our wiring is CAT 3 and will need to be replaced. We have also been hit hard in the last year by Internet attacks on our Windows based workstations. In order to secure our network and meet growing demands for services we need to replace several servers and deploy new ones with requested services such as streaming quicktime and coldfusion.

Proposed Projects (Non-ITAC Eligible)

Administrative Support Life Cycle Funding

\$ 25,000

We need an allocation to implement a life-cycle funding strategy based on 1/4 replacement for administrative staff and non-tenure track faculty similar to that provided by the CLC, as well as, provide for new positions.

Appendix I:

Building Network Status

Our network switch architecture was upgraded to 10/100 Mbps and we have a fiber link to the NOC. However, some of our internal wiring is CAT 3 and will need to be replaced. Also the initial configuration of one Ethernet port per office is no longer sufficient. Many offices have temporary 4-10 port hubs to handle the overload. We will need to invest in a wireless solution for our building in the future unless The University deploys campus-wide coverage. We continue to provide a router slot for Central Duplicating and port for the University Child Care Center, both located in our building. At this time, all of the computers used by students, faculty, and staff are connected to the University's network through Ethernet connections. All faculty and staff are using at least PPC/Pentium workstations. The School has several dedicated servers. Internally they provide cross-platform file sharing, networked printer access, run LabMan software to manage the LRC Computer Lab, manage the IT classroom, and provide utility, diagnostic and installation software. Externally they provide Internet services, especially database applications ranging from on-line testing and application forms to a searchable university-wide database of TA/RA job applicants and a community-wide database of human service volunteer and employment opportunities. These are needing to be upgraded to better secure the network and provide requested services such as coldfusion and streaming media.

Computer Lab Status

The LRC computer laboratory is managed as an open facility, not limited to social work students. The lab is used by students, TA's, AI's, GRA's, and faculty. The computer lab is filled to capacity with 24 workstations, 6 G3 and 6 PPC 7300/200 Macintosh (surplus from the SMF) and 12 Pentium III Dell machines. The LRC also has a video production studio with tape editing equipment and a iMac computer workstation with photo, graphics, and authoring software, a color scanner, digital camera, and CD/DVD burner.

Classroom Technology Status

Three classrooms have the UT IT configuration. The School has allocated funds to upgrade two more classrooms to the UT classroom configuration scheduled for this summer. Another classroom has 30 Pentium III Dell workstations and a patchwork setup instructor station, VCR, and LCD projector. This facility needs to be standardized to the UT configuration like the other classrooms. The School also has a large capacity auditorium that is used for classes, presentations, conferences, and theater productions. The Utopia Theater is used by many other departments on campus in addition to the School of Social Work. It does not have any presentation technology.

Curriculum Innovation Status

We have numerous faculty that have been using WebCT and blackboard for a number of years. The School is making a big push to get all courses on the Web and develop content that can be delivered as distance education and for participation in the Knowledge Gateway. The School recognizes that Internet delivery is the future of education and necessary for us to compete as a world class institution. Much of the School's existing departmental Web and curricula materials will need to be reworked to be 508 compliant and faculty will require training and support to produce new materials in compliance.

Staffing Status

The School recognizes it is at a significant disadvantage by not being able to provide annual funding for adequate staff support. With increased technology in the classrooms, growing security issues and cleanup after attacks, new 508 compliance regulations for Web materials, and department dependent software licensing our current staff are overwhelmed with just day-to-day administration. The School has only two full-time professional technical staff. They are funded from ITAC, IT fee, and School funds depending on budget and allocation. Together with a handful of GRA, AI, and workstudy positions, they are responsible for all network administration, Web resources, training, data analysis, technical support , IT classrooms, the LRC computer lab, student support, and faculty IT projects related to curriculum development.