

# **School of Social Work**

## **2005 - 2006 Information Technology Vision Plan**

### ***Summary of Requests***

The School of Social Work has used its ITAC allocation to create and support state-of-the-art classrooms, a student computer lab, and student work areas. Our proposal is to provide ongoing maintenance and support for our existing resources, add to our classroom infrastructure with IT resources for our 230 seat auditorium and provide faculty and students with basic support for curriculum development, student projects, community outreach, and digital asset collection.

**Classroom Technology System for Auditorium** **\$180,000**  
Installation of permanent multimedia equipment and electrical/lighting replacement to make our 230 seat Utopia Theatre a state-of-the-art instructional and small conference facility.

**Production Studio and Capture/Web Cast Equipment** **\$77,000**  
Equipment to capture, produce, and Web-cast classroom activities; produce curricula materials; digitize our extensive video library; and provide AV technician support.

**Lifecycle Funding for IT Classrooms, LRC, and Network and Staff Support** **\$96,000**  
Lifecycle replacement funding for equipment and recurring funds for software licenses, ITS consulting, and support personnel.

**Network Closet Cooling System** **\$15,000**  
The original design of our building did not include air circulation in our network closet. We need to retrofit the facility with an air conditioning system to guard against equipment failure.

**Total Request** **\$368,000**

### ***Overview of Current IT Programs and Infrastructure***

#### **Vision Mission and Goals**

We are committed to our students and our enrollment continues to rise. We will continue utilizing our ITAC funds to provide them with the best possible technology and support for education and training. 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 vast information about people, society, and service. Our mission, *"Through excellence in professional education, research, and service, The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work provides national leadership to promote social and economic justice, alleviate critical social problems, and enhance human well-being."* and core value *"We believe that, in order to enhance the social work knowledge base, the attainment of our mission requires critical thinking, professional development, and meaningful scholarship. As we improve our ability to transmit this knowledge to students and others effectively, we are better able to alleviate suffering and to promote social justice in the communities we serve."* direct us to move beyond the classroom. We need information technology not only to improve the educational experience for our students in the classroom, we need resources for development and delivery into the community in which they

will be working. A large portion of our student's educational experience is in field work. We seek to maintain open channels of communication between those students, their placement agencies, and our classrooms. Our vision is to support faculty and students, making it easy for them to access and use appropriate resources both in and outside the classroom and to provide outreach to the community through our students, facility, and our digital resource archive.

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 support. At current funding, we proceed incrementally into the future, often holding funds from one year to fully fund improvements in the next. There is little room for innovation without extra support. 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 fund and provide resources such as DIIA and ITS low/no cost software purchasing, network and security support, and help desk training and support.

## **Infrastructure**

Our building has wired coverage. The network 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 in the future. We have installed wireless in student areas and will expand it to the whole building. We continue to provide a router slot for Central Duplicating and connections for the University Child Care Center, both located in our building. The School has several dedicated servers. Internally they provide cross-platform file sharing, networked printer access, 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 community-wide database of human service volunteer and employment opportunities. These are needing to be upgraded to better secure the network and provide additional services.

Our classroom infrastructure is almost complete. We have six classrooms with the UT IT configuration. One IT classroom has 30 workstations and a patchwork setup instructor station, VCR, and LCD projector. This facility will be standardized to the UT configuration like the other classrooms along with 2 remaining classrooms and 3 seminar rooms. 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.

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,. The LRC has tape editing equipment and a computer workstation with graphics, and authoring software, a color scanner, digital camera, and CD/DVD burner. The LRC has a vast collection of video tapes and recordings that need to be digitally preserved and cataloged.

## **Staffing**

The School recognizes it is at a significant disadvantage by not being able to provide annual funding for adequate staff support. With increased use of technology in the classrooms, security issues, and demand for Web materials our staff resources are exhausted with day-to-day support and administration. The School has only two full-time professional technical staff. They are responsible for all network administration, Web resources, training, technical support, IT classrooms, the LRC computer lab, student support, and faculty IT projects related to curriculum development. Students receive some support from TA's working in the LRC. We would like to increase our student support with a dedicated full-time person in the Learning Resource Center attached to our proposed production studio. Recurring funds for IT staff in our ITAC allocation is a high priority, especially since student fees may disappear.

## **Current and Proposed Funding Sources**

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. In addition to ITAC, students pay an IT fee and an LRC fee. The IT fee was used for permanent support staff positions and TA'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 continues to seek outside funds especially for renovations to the Utopia Theatre. We also received wonderful support from ITS. When the SMF lab facility was upgraded we were able to deploy several of the older SMF workstations in our lab and modify our lifecycle replacement costs for the current cycle.

## **Best Practices**

The implementation of wireless has improved student access while reducing overall costs. With building wide implementation we will be able to deliver full access, encourage student laptop purchase and incorporate handhelds and PDA's into our instruction. At the same time we can reduce our need for additional wiring, reduce support and maintenance of joint use workstations, and cut back on lifecycle replacement of workstations.

## ***Use of Previous Allocations***

All ITAC expenditures were consistent with our vision plan. In order to fully fund improvements this year, we had to put aside some of our 2003/2004 ITAC allocation. This carryover added to our 2004/2005 ITAC formula and one-time allocation enabled us to fund network and several classroom improvements in full. Infrastructure expenditures include: building-wide wireless, standalone IT consoles and projection systems in three classrooms, and projection systems and a shared mobile console in three seminar/conference rooms. Work is scheduled for completion before classes next fall.

In addition to infrastructure, we used our ITAC money for lifecycle replacement of classroom, LRC, and network equipment, ITS consulting, and for staff support. We decided to emphasize infrastructure expenditures this year and complete our IT classrooms and wireless network because it has a substantial cost benefit over incremental implementation. We were unable to fund additional staff and curricula development proposals in our vision due to insufficient funds.

## ***Needs and Proposed Use of Funds***

### **Classroom Technology System for Auditorium \$180,000**

The School has a 230 seat auditorium that is used for classes, presentations, conferences, and theater productions. The Utopia Theatre is used by many other departments on campus in addition to the School of Social Work. It currently does not have any presentation technology even though we use it regularly for classes. We will continue to seek funds, estimated at ½ million or more, to renovate and preserve this wonderful historic site. In the meantime, we need to use it as a classroom for our growing program. We require installation of permanent multimedia equipment and electrical/lighting renovations to convert the Utopia Theatre into a state-of-the-art instructional and small conference facility. We would of course continue to share this facility with the rest of campus.

### **Production Studio and Capture/Web-Cast Equipment \$77,000**

Our students spend a significant part of their education in field placement internships and there is a growing number of students choosing placements outside of Austin, the state, and even the US. We need to communicate with them individually and bring them into the classroom environment from afar. Our students in the classroom do a lot of role playing exercises and practice counseling and interview skills. The capability to record and broadcast these sessions will significantly impact learning. We have regular trainings, workshops, conferences, seminars, presentations, etc. conducted by faculty, students, and community experts. We also have a vast library of tapes and recordings and must be restored and preserved. We need the resources to capture, produce, archive, and broadcast our activities and instructional materials. Our facility has a 44 seat classroom located above a small soundproof studio with accompanying control room . We have submitted a joint proposal with Communications, Fine Arts, Nursing, and Liberal Arts for the encoders and shared server necessary to collect and broadcast from the two sites. This proposal builds on the joint proposal to create a production studio for taping, video and DVD editing; to equip the classroom and soundproof studio with camera and sound collection systems; and to provide resources for restoration and archive of our media collection. In addition to a one-time purchase of equipment, we seek recurring funding for 1 FTE support staff. We have consistently asked for recurring staff funding in our vision plan and recognize that we are unable to make the leap into development and production of media rich instructional materials without it. The staff person would assist with the AV equipment, support students in the lab, help faculty develop curricula and produce and maintain our digital assets collection. Future considerations are to make materials in our digital archive available to public school teachers and counselors through Utopia.

### **Lifecycle Funding for IT Classrooms, LRC, and Network and Staff Support \$96,000**

This proposal is for recurring funding to maintain our network, IT classrooms and LRC computer lab so that faculty and students can teach and learn in a first class environment. We operate on a 1/3 annual replacement lifecycle for classroom and lab workstations. We also partially fund a staff position to oversee and maintain our IT resources.

### **Network Closet Cooling System \$15,000**

The original design of our building did not include air circulation in our network closet when we moved here in 1994. Over the last three years we have had two switches fail. Network services claims it is due to excessive heat. We have explored other options with network services and physical plant engineers, but their best plan is to retrofit the network room with an air conditioning system.