

**DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION AND ASSESSMENT (DIIA)  
AND  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (ITS)  
VISION PLAN • 2006–2007**

**SUMMARY OF REQUESTS**

DIIA integrates pedagogy, instructional technology, and assessment to promote effective and innovative instructional and evaluation practices in support of the University's core purpose and values. ITS is committed to delivering secure, responsive, high-quality, customer-oriented services and support that foster a productive academic and research environment for the students, faculty and staff at the University of Texas at Austin. Both of these organizations strive to provide the university with innovative, secure, robust services that benefit both students and faculty.

From a pilot project in Fall 2000, Blackboard has grown into a system of 3,596 classes with 1,611 instructors and was used in Fall 2004 by 49,915 students. This represents a 172% increase in the number of instructors and an 84% increase in the number of students using the system since the spring of 2002. Each semester this number grows and is expected to increase as more functionality is added to the system.

DIIA and ITS have a five-year history of successful Blackboard collaboration. ITS has provided the infrastructure support and integration of administrative data into Blackboard while DIIA has provided training, pedagogy consulting, and faculty support for Blackboard. In ITS, this system has been funded primarily from one-time project and balance-forward money (\$304,889 in FY 03–04 and \$395,429 in FY 04–05). In DIIA, recurring money has been used to support the training effort (~\$165,000 in FY 04–05). Blackboard is now so critical to teaching and learning at UT that the campus needs it to be funded in a consistent way to assure faculty and students that it will continue to be reliable, stable, and robust. Our 2006–2007 request is for \$735,000.

**TOTAL REQUEST FOR 2006–2007**

***Ongoing Operations***

<b>Ongoing comprehensive Blackboard support</b>	<b>\$735,000</b>
Blackboard training support	\$100,000
Blackboard building block customization	\$100,000
Blackboard content management system	\$75,000
Blackboard licensing	\$65,000
Blackboard hardware	\$150,000
Blackboard backup servers	\$160,000
Blackboard technical support	\$85,000

**SUMMARY OF PROJECTS**

***Ongoing Operations***

**Ongoing comprehensive Blackboard support** **\$ 735,000**

Blackboard is a mission-critical system supporting all academic areas across campus. It facilitates learning in the classroom by providing communication and collaborative tools such as real-time chat, threaded discussion, class e-mail, and online file exchanges. In addition to classes, Blackboard has provided community support to facilitate information sharing and discussion for committees such as the Commission of 125, and UT researchers.

**Blackboard training support** **\$100,000**

Continuing funds are needed for two training specialists hired to provide support for faculty using Blackboard.

**Blackboard building block customization** **\$100,000**

ITS and DIIA continue to collaborate to acquire and develop Building Blocks software modules that extend the functionality of Blackboard. These extensions allow Blackboard to be customized for integration into University business processes. Funding is needed for one-and-a-half FTE for new Java/JSP-skilled programmers.

**Blackboard content management system** **\$75,000**

An active evaluation of the Blackboard content management system is underway. This system allows students and faculty to manage and share files easily. Librarians are able to create electronic reserves and manage copyright issues for instructors. In addition, General Libraries is looking into this as an alternative to the eReserve system. Instructors are able to update materials once for multiple classes instead of updating each class one at-a-time, thus reducing the amount of storage needed each semester. Electronic portfolios are also part of the system.

**Blackboard licensing** **\$65,000**

Software licensing is currently costing \$65,000 per year.

**Blackboard hardware** **\$150,000**

Hardware for Blackboard includes servers and storage devices that average \$150,000 per year. As usage of the system continues to grow, additional funds may be required to expand the hardware capacity.

**Blackboard backup servers** **\$160,000**

In order to diminish the risk of Blackboard system failure, ITS will implement Oracle RAC (an Oracle cluster). ITS will purchase two additional Oracle servers at \$80,000 each. This will ensure that in case of system failure, Blackboard can be back online within four hours. Currently it would require more than four hours to restore Blackboard services if the system goes down.

**Blackboard technical support** **\$85,000**

Various technical personnel in ITS dedicate a percentage of their time to support and maintain the operating system and hardware.

**Total funding requested by DIIA** **\$200,000**

**Total funding requested by ITS** **\$535,000**