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DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION AND ASSESSMENT (DIIA)
AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (ITS)
VISION PLAN • 2008–2009

SUMMARY OF REQUESTS

DIIA and ITS are asking for recurring funding of \$41,500 to support the ~FAST Tex program.

Through the Faculty And Student Teams for Technology (~FAST Tex) grant and support program, faculty are awarded the time of tech-savvy students to collaborate in building engaging instructional technologies that enhance student learning in UT Austin courses. Projects are selected based on their potential to reach a large audience, to promote relevance in coursework, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning, and to transform pedagogy in innovative and engaging ways. Many ~FAST Tex projects have been recognized by the provost's Innovative Instructional Technology Awards Program (IITAP).

The program has supported 221 projects in numerous colleges over the past 5 years, employing 241 students. Last year, the ~FAST Tex program received \$120,000 that funded 26 projects in 59 courses, ranging from developing Web-based interactive tools, instructional repositories, simulations, and visualizations to building tutorials and resources that will impact over 11,000 students.

As ~FAST Tex projects have grown in scope, scale, complexity, and student impact, the need for more robust and secure test and production servers has also increased. It is becoming increasingly common for ~FAST Tex projects to be housed on DIIA development servers or on marginally supported department servers instead of on centralized production servers, because faculty and departments are unable to provide production server resources. This means that valuable project assets may be lost and that projects may languish or be deployed on less robust servers. The absence of centralized production servers also makes it more difficult to measure usage of the instructional modules, which may be scattered across a dozen or more development and departmental servers.

DIIA and ITS propose a collaboration to support the further development and production of ~FAST Tex projects on centrally maintained servers and storage. This will help ensure that ~FAST Tex project assets are consolidated and backed-up and that it is possible to provide a stable, production-ready environment that is similar to the development environment. It will also streamline project development and enhance security, while improving processes for project management, tracking, and evaluation.

TOTAL RECURRING REQUEST FOR ANNUAL SUPPORT	\$41,500
Virtual server for ~FAST Tex development	\$1,200
Production server for ~FAST Tex projects	\$1,200
Server administration	\$14,000
Database services	\$600
Disk space for production and development servers (capital expenditure for 3-year life cycle)	\$24,500
Total funding requested by DIIA and ITS	\$41,500