

**1999 - 2000**

**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 to faculty and students, while minimizing the requirement that they become individually proficient in information access and presentation technologies. We seek a learning experience that emphasizes mastery of content over mastery of technology. We can provide complete information support to faculty and students, while making it easy for them to access and use, by providing appropriate resources for development and delivery. This requires information resources, equipment resources, and personnel resources.

The School has a strong vision of what it could do given the resources. It understands the potential and utility of information technology in the classroom and the profession. However, small schools like ours face formidable challenges in attaining and maintaining information 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 for a network, a computer lab, and an IT classroom. At current funding, we must proceed at a snail's pace, generally replacing obsolete equipment by

trickling down out-of-date equipment. The School of Social Work greatly appreciates every effort by The University to improve the disparity of resources between schools. Each implementation has a dramatic effect on our ability to improve and provide technological resources. The FCI and recent Microsoft agreement have made significant contributions to offset our operating expenses. The special project and multimedia allocation we received last year allowed us to open our first IT classroom.

We are committed to our students and will continue to utilize our ITAC funds to provide them with the best possible instructional technology 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. We have four proposals eligible for ITAC funding and one non-eligible. They are listed in the table below.

Proposal (ITAC Eligible)	Cost
<b>School of Social Work Web Resources</b> Dynamic Web based database of social work resources	\$46,800
<b>IT Classroom</b> Completion of IT Classroom	\$99,100
<b>Classroom Presentation and Instructional Technology</b> IT equipment in 6 classrooms and Utopia Theater	\$101,500
<b>Video Production</b> Video taping, editing and production equipment	\$63,900
<b>Total ITAC</b>	\$311,300
Proposal (Non-ITAC Eligible)	
<b>Computers for Field Faculty</b> Computers for 12 full-time Field Faculty	\$38,400
<b>Total Non-ITAC</b>	\$38,400
<b>Total Proposal</b>	\$349,700

## School of Social Work Vision

Social work is a multi-faceted cross discipline profession. 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. Thus, the study of social work requires enormous complex information resources about people, society, and

service.

The goal of the information technology vision plan in the School of Social Work is to provide complete information support for all of the School's instructional programs. We wish to improve the educational experience for both students and faculty by taking advantage of the opportunities and resources made possible by the ongoing development of information technologies. This requires access to the products of information technology, but not necessarily a comprehensive understanding of the technologies that deliver the information. Information technology poses a pitfall for a discipline like ours if we get trapped in learning the technology and miss the vast resources and information it provides. For example, do we train students to search the Internet for information, a course by itself, or do we provide them with the information and focus on developing their critical thinking and analytical skills? We choose to incorporate technology and its by-products into our classes and not to restructure our classes around emerging technologies. In a model, not dissimilar to that of assigned readings, we seek a learning experience that emphasizes mastery of content over mastery of technology.

Our vision is to provide the information and technology necessary to faculty and students, while minimizing the requirement that they become individually proficient in information access and presentation technologies. We can provide complete information support to faculty and students, while making it easy for them to access and use, by providing appropriate resources for development and delivery. This requires information resources, equipment resources, and personnel resources. We will achieve our goal, if we can provide the following:

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;

Equipment Resources for the development and delivery of information technology;

Personnel Resources for technical expertise, support, and maintenance.

While we have made some progress toward actualizing this vision, there are substantial gaps. We recently upgraded our network to a switch architecture and opened a new IT classroom. Our LRC computer lab is nearly at capacity, our multimedia lab and video recording studio are functioning, and all full-time faculty and staff are using at least 68040/486 desktop machines. The School has a number of Internet servers employing database technology to provide a variety of internal and external services from on-line testing and application forms to a searchable community-wide database of human service volunteer and employment opportunities. We suffer most in the area of personnel. Although we have technical staff, with a high level of technical expertise, as well as professional degrees in social work, we do not have additional funds for support. Thus rather than development and training, our technical staff are primarily engaged in basic day to day operations of support and maintenance.

## **Facilities and Staffing**

### **School-Wide Network**

Our network router and hubs were recently replaced with a newer switch architecture. This was necessary to support the IT classroom and ensure Y2K compliance. We also provide a router port for Central Duplicating and plan a future connection for the University Child Care facility, 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 full time faculty and staff are using at least 68040/486 desktop machines.

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 community-wide database of human service volunteer and employment opportunities.

### LRC Computer Laboratory

The laboratory is managed as an open facility, not limited to social work students. The lab is used by students, TA's, AI's, and RA's. The computer lab currently has 9 PPC Macintosh and 5 Dell Pentium machines with space for 7 more workstations. The School will fill the available space with 2 more Macintosh, on order, and 5 Dell, planned for the next BPP.

### Instructional Technology Classroom

The School has just opened an IT classroom with space for 30 workstations. Remodeling costs and budget constraints only allowed partial completion with 15 workstations and limited LCD projection capability.

### Multimedia Production Facility

The LRC has a video production studio and a PPC 8600 AV computer workstation with photo, graphics, and authoring software, a color scanner, digital camera, slide scanner, and CD burner.

### Staff Support

The School has two full time technical support staff.

A senior systems analyst, who is responsible for network administration, Web resources, training, data analysis, technical support for faculty and staff, and supervision.

A systems analyst, who is responsible for the IT classroom, the LRC computer lab, student support, and faculty IT projects related to curriculum development.

The School has two half time support staff.

A systems analyst, who provides faculty support and special projects.

An assistant (Graduate), who is responsible for student support in the LRC computer lab.

## **Proposed Projects (ITAC Eligible)**

### **Project Title: School of Social Work Web Resources**

This proposal is for funding of personnel to develop and implement a dynamic Web based database of social work resources. This is primary to our goal of providing information support to faculty and students, while making it easy for them to access and use. The database will be a complete repository of searchable, annotated, and indexed social work links to on-line resources. Its purpose is to minimize the time it takes faculty and students to both learn how to search effectively and to locate useful resources by providing one primary source of current content directly related to our curriculum and specialization areas. Faculty and

students will use the database to access information resources. At the same time, they will feed the database with new information. Items will be directly linked to courses and specialization areas. It will be a primary resource for student information searches, faculty curricula development, and the social work community. It will also provide an opportunity for the Center for Social Work Research to showcase and disseminate faculty projects and better integrate research into teaching. Library staff have agreed to provide training and support for Internet search and indexing techniques and information and access to existing library resources. This resource will also move us one step closer in preparation for delivering on-line courses. We plan to work closely with our Library departmental contact in all phases of this project and its implementation could easily have a national audience.

There is no equipment cost associated with this project. It can be developed using existing School servers in Filemaker. As traffic increases it will be migrated to ACITS faster and more accessible network system using Cold Fusion or other emerging technology. The only cost is personnel for development and implementation. This plan is projected for a three year implementation. Year one will involve development of the database and Web interface, consultation with faculty for curriculum needs and resources, and research to identify, annotate, and gather resource links. In year two, staff will continue building the database and focus on assisting faculty to develop and incorporate Web resources into their curricula, with emphasis on programs such as WebCT. In year three we will continue the activities of year two and liaison with Library departmental contacts to either include or export the database prototype to other cross disciplines: Psychology, Nursing, Human Ecology, Public Affairs, etc.

Although we have the technical expertise to implement this project, the amount of work involved in creating and maintaining a dynamic resource of this magnitude exceeds our current staffing. Therefore, we are requesting funds for 1 half-time systems analyst and 2 half-time RA positions at a total cost for salary and fringe of \$46,800. Projected over three years at present staffing and salaries the total cost would be \$140,4000. In years two and three the RA positions could be filled by social work interns. Expected duties are listed below.

(1) half-time Systems Analyst--Supervise RA's, develop and maintain database and Web interface, train and support faculty in developing curricula materials, liaison with Library contact and other departments

(2) half-time RA position--research and gather links, annotation, editing, faculty support

<b>Year One</b>	<b>Cost</b>
(1) half-time Systems Analyst	\$22,000
(2) half-time RA position	\$24,800
Total Cost	\$46,800
Projected Annually for a Total 3 yr Expenditure	\$140,400

**Project Title: IT Classroom**

This proposal is for funding to complete our IT classroom. Work on our new information technology classroom began in May 1998 and was completed and put into operation the second week of classes this fall. The classroom has an instructor station and 15 student workstations. In consultation with ACITS, the

room was equipped with furniture with recessed monitors for maximum instruction effectiveness, visibility, and desktop space. The facility is currently engaged full time by 5 courses and scheduled by others when necessary. Although it is our primary teaching and presentation facility, it is still incomplete. A large portion of the initial project money went to remodeling, furniture, and a network upgrade to support the additional connections. There was little money left for equipment and none for staff support. There is space for 15 additional workstations and we need to purchase and install an audio/video system. Unfortunately the length of the room and low ceiling make conventional projection systems inadequate. In consultation with ACITS, we have a plan for a video delivery system that feeds video directly to each student's desktop thus eliminating the need for overhead monitors and projection screens. Our original plan is to have this as an open facility that could be scheduled by other Colleges. This is particularly attractive with the expansive after hours parking available. We realize that without full-time support staff for scheduling, security, and maintenance, we cannot open this facility to other departments.

We are requesting funds for completion of the facility as a bulk appropriation because it can not be done incrementally. As a network managed facility, it is critical that all workstations have comparable equipment. We are requesting \$66,800 for equipment to complete the classroom, \$5,000 for support (i.e., software, network charges, insurance, and maintenance), and \$27,300 for one full time support staff position. The total cost of the proposal is \$99,100. Support and personnel are recurring annual costs. Projected over three years at present staffing and salaries the total cost would be \$163,700.

<b>Year One</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Total Equipment	\$66,800
Support (i.e., software, network charges, insurance, and maintenance)	\$5,000
Computer User Services Specialist	\$27,300
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$99,100</b>
<b>Recurring Annual Costs</b>	
Support (i.e., software, network charges, insurance, and maintenance)	\$5,000
Computer User Services Specialist	\$27,300
<b>Projected Total 3 yr Expenditure</b>	<b>\$163,700</b>

**Project Title: Classroom Presentation and Instructional Technology**

Faculty within the school have consistently asked for improved video projection and computer presentation capabilities in classrooms. There is a real need to be able to incorporate instructional technology resources including computer and Web based multimedia instructional materials, CD-ROM and traditional media such as videotape into classroom instruction. Students in almost every class can benefit from presentation materials. Excerpts of movies, TV programs, special PBS programs, etc. can easily give students graphic illustrations of the concepts faculty are trying to teach in class. Furthermore, students of this generation tend to be more visual and less fond of the traditional teaching methods. Currently, faculty fight over our three existing VCR/monitors mounted on wheeled carts. We only have one LCD projector which is stationed in

the IT classroom.

We would like to equip each of six classrooms with a secure wall mounted rack housing VCR, receiver, and distribution amplifier, with speakers and ceiling mounted LCD projector. This would allow for video, computer based multimedia, and Web based resources. With one switch an instructor can turn on all rack components while adjusting sound and controlling projector output with wireless remote. The six permanent facilities will be augmented by 2 mobile hutches with VCRs and video monitors. The hutches will also contain a laptop and portable data projector which can be used with the hutch or transported to other locations on and off campus.

In addition to our traditional classrooms, we would like to equip the Utopia Theater with state of art presentation and instructional technology. It is a wonderful presentation and teaching facility in the School, however it is not installed with any audio/video technology short of a microphone equipped lectern. Currently there are six social work classes meeting there and it is regularly scheduled by other departments. The School could use it for various video and downlink conferences we now schedule and pay for at other facilities. The Utopia Theater has been approved for remodeling by The University, so an equipment installation at this time is advantageous.

This proposal is for \$48,000 to install secure presentation equipment in six classrooms, \$32,500 to equip the Utopia Theater, and \$21,000 to outfit 2 mobile hutches. This is a one time equipment expenditure of \$101,500. Expenditures are outlined in the table below.

<b>Year One</b>	<b>Cost</b>
(6) Classroom presentation equipment @\$8,000	\$48,000
(2) Mobile AV/Computer hutch @\$10,500	\$21,000
Utopia Theater	\$32,500
Total Cost	\$101,500

### **Project Title: Video Production**

Field faculty, who teach practice courses with a heavy emphasis on experiential learning and modeling of technique, are currently working on video projects to provide consistency for content commonly repeated in a number of course sections. A major obstacle has been not having internal resources both equipment and staff support for taping and editing. The same type of equipment and staff support could help all of the faculty make fuller use of special speakers. For instance, the School often has practitioners from the community come and tell students how they work with special populations, or how they approach a certain problem with their clients. Each speaker's content could potentially be taped, edited, and made available for presentation to other classes or for self-paced instruction. Additionally, the School is working on an agreement to deliver our MSSW degree program to the University of Mexico. We have the opportunity, with proper equipment, to tape our full MSSW curriculum delivered in simultaneous Spanish and English.

This proposal is a one time expenditure for tape recording and editing equipment for taping presentations, demonstrations and curriculum content enrichment projects, digital production equipment for producing finished video and multimedia products, and personnel costs for one half-time graduate assistant level support staff (RTF student). We are requesting \$27,000 for video recording and editing equipment, \$24,500 for digital editing equipment and software, and \$12,400 for one half time RTF graduate assistant. The total

cost of the project is \$63,900. Support staff is a recurring annual cost. Projected over three years at present staffing and salaries the total cost would be \$88,700.

<b>Year One</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Video taping and editing equipment	\$27,000
Digital editing equipment and software	\$24,500
(1) half-time graduate assistant position--From RTF	\$12,400
Total Cost	\$63,900
<b>Recurring Annual Costs</b>	
(1) half-time graduate assistant position--From RTF	\$12,400
Projected Total 3 yr Expenditure	\$88,700

## **Proposed Projects (Non-ITAC Eligible)**

### **Project Title: Computers for Field Faculty**

This proposal is an effort to receive funds from internal University sources for a one time purchase of computer workstations for our field faculty. While the field faculty are vital to both the BSW and MSSW programs, they were not included in the Faculty Computer Initiative because they are non-tenure track faculty. Field faculty teach the Integrated Seminar, Methods, and supervise field interns at the BSW level and teach Methods and supervise field interns at the MSSW level. Each year there are approximately 12 full-time field faculty. Three of the faculty have been with the School for 20 years and two for more than 10 years. These faculty are vital to the School's mission and need comparable resources. They are also doing some of the more innovative work with information technology to produce instructional materials and introduce students to the use of hyperlink text in field notes and process recordings. Unfortunately, they have to use the student computer lab to produce coursework rather than their own desktops.

The ability of field faculty to teach effectively impacts all students in the BSW and MSSW degree program. In addition, field faculty have a direct influence on student behavior within their placement agencies because of the close one-on-one contact through field supervision. In this capacity, the faculty's role in shaping student understanding and use of applied technology in the student's placement is very important to the student and the agency.

This proposal is for \$36,000 to purchase computers and software for 12 full-time field faculty. There are no additional costs associated with this proposal.

<b>Year One</b>	<b>Cost</b>
(12) Computers and software for Field Faculty @3,200	\$38,400
Total Cost	\$38,400

## **IT Funding Overview and Life Cycle Methodology**

Small schools like ours face formidable challenges in attaining and maintaining information 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 for a network, a computer lab, and an IT classroom. There are few resources for staff support and none left for new project startup and innovation. We are committed to our students and will continue to utilize our ITAC funds to provide them with the best possible instructional technology for education and training. However, we need some mechanism to provide renewable funding for support staff and equipment for ITAC eligible projects, as well as, faculty, staff, administration, and research.

The School of Social Work greatly appreciates every effort by The University to improve the disparity of resources between schools. Each implementation has a dramatic effect on our ability to improve and provide technological resources. The FCI and recent Microsoft agreement have made significant contributions to offset our operating expenses. The special project and multimedia allocation we received last year allowed us to open our first IT classroom.

### **Funding Sources**

Our annual ITAC allocation is used primarily to maintain our computer lab and partially pay for one professional staff position to oversee the network and overall technology operations. For example, this year we will exhaust our reserves to replace 68040/486 computers in the lab for full software and cross platform compatibility. Without additional funding, we can not complete infrastructure projects nor put anything toward development and innovation. 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.

Our infrastructure for information technology has great potential. Our facility is newly renovated, all of our classrooms and offices have Ethernet connections, and we have a wonderful presentation and teaching facility in the School, the Utopia Theater. Unfortunately that potential is yet unrealized. Our newly opened IT classroom is only half complete. It has room for 15 additional workstations, no audio/video presentation capability, and no staff. We have no other classrooms with even rudimentary presentation capabilities. And the Utopia Theater it is not installed with any audio/video technology short of a microphone equipped lectern. Also missing is one fully funded technical staff position devoted to student support.

In addition to ITAC we use our M&O budget, when available, to purchase new equipment for faculty and administrative staff. Students contribute greatly to the School. They are assessed 5 fees, some of which pay for technical staff and, in special cases, equipment. For example, when the MicroCenter closed down and sold off their used administrative computers we used some of the student field fee to some buy computers for field faculty, most of whom were still using MacPluses. Recognizing the need for support staff, students voted last year to implement an IT fee and raise the LRC fee to provide support in the computer lab and IT classroom. The FCI is our only source of new computers for new faculty and unfortunately these new purchases do not provide trickle down resources for the rest of the School.

The Center for Social Work Research has been our best source of renewable technology resources. Research projects add equipment to their budget when possible. However, since the majority of our funding sources are state and local and projects tend to be short term with small budgets, equipment purchases are limited and generally only provide for one CPU. In addition, equipment purchased on a project can be requested to be returned to the funder at project completion. Still this has been a source of new equipment for faculty with research projects and, through trickle down, the best source of getting equipment for the School.

With our current funding options we are forced to limp along with trickle down of outdated resources replacing obsolete resources as our only form of renewal. For example, the original FCI allocation a few years ago was a wonderful windfall for the School replacing MacPluses and SE's on faculty desktops. However, even though those original 68040/486 CPU's are now outdated and cannot run the latest operating systems or software, they are our current set of trickle down upgrades for faculty and staff.

## Staffing

The School recognizes it is at a significant disadvantage by not being able to provide annual funding for adequate staff support. The School has two full-time professional technical staff. One is funded with a mix of ITAC, student fees, and research project funds and the other is paid from the student IT fee. Both have a high level of technical expertise, professional degrees in social work, and many years experience in database, Web, and IT development. With additional support, their skills could be better utilized by the School. Currently their time is spent on day-to-day operations providing: maintenance and support for the network, computer lab, IT classroom, and faculty and staff resources; basic student support in the lab; and special projects such as Y2K, the vision plan, and trickle down installations. With additional staff to provide basic day-to-day operations such as providing student support and running the IT classroom and computer lab, our professional staff would be free to provide technical expertise and vision to assist and guide students and faculty in the pursuit of innovative ideas in education, research, and curriculum development without being consumed with the basics of 'does it exist' and 'how to do it'.

Student also directly pay for 2 half-time support staff associated with the IT classroom and computer lab. One works on special projects with faculty and the other, a graduate assistant, provides help desk support for students in the computer lab. They are paid for with IT and LRC student fees.

## Appendix I

### Total IT Summary Expenditures Report for 1997-1998

<b>Category</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
<b>Staff</b>	<b>(Salary/Fringe)</b>	
Sr. Systems Analyst (1/2 time)	\$ 27,210	ITAC
Systems Analyst	\$ 41,431	IT Fee
Systems Analyst (1/2 time, 3 mons)	\$ 2,914	IT Fee
Assistant (Graduate)	\$ 12,417	LRC Fee
<b>Equipment</b> (IT classroom and LRC Computer Lab)	\$ 68,159	ITAC
<b>Facilities</b> (IT classroom remodel and furniture)	\$ 70,062	ITAC
<b>Network</b> (Upgrade router/hubs to switch	\$ 12,769	ITAC

architecture)

Other

Software	\$ 2,175	ITAC
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Support/Maintenance	\$ 11,528	ITAC
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## Appendix II

### Infrastructure Summary 1997-1998

#### School-Wide Network

Our network router and hubs were recently replaced with a newer switch architecture. This was necessary to support the IT classroom and ensure Y2K compliance. We also provide a router port for Central Duplicating and plan a future connection for the University Child Care facility, 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 full time faculty and staff are using at least 68040/486 desktop machines. All classrooms have an Ethernet connection.

#### Instructional Technology Classrooms

Work on our new information technology classroom began in May 1998 and was completed and put into operation the second week of classes this fall. The classroom has an instructor station and 15 student workstations with space for 15 additional workstations. Other IT equipment shared between classrooms is a LCD projector and 3 VCR/Monitors on carts.