

## Vice President for Information Technology Status and Activity Report for September 2024

Prepared by Timothy M. Chester, Vice President for Information Technology (VPIT)

### 1. Key Items for Faculty and Staff Meetings

- *Prepare for fall network maintenance:* EITS plans to conduct the next biannual network maintenance on Sunday, September 29, 2024. These biannual network maintenances are necessary to ensure continued stability and efficiency of the network, allowing EITS to provide ample bandwidth and Internet capacity to the University in the future. These large network maintenances are typically conducted twice a year, in the spring and fall, during which campus Internet and campus information systems are usually inaccessible. For more information regarding this maintenance visit, [https://eits.uga.edu/stories/sept29\\_fallnetworkmaintenance/](https://eits.uga.edu/stories/sept29_fallnetworkmaintenance/). For questions, contact Rayid Tartir at [rayid@uga.edu](mailto:rayid@uga.edu).
- *Request for proposal process under way for enterprise survey tool:* A search is underway to potentially identify a new enterprise survey research tool for the University of Georgia, which could result in a decommission of Qualtrics by August 1, 2025. A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been posted and current plans are to share an update on the outcome of the RFP process and the name of the next enterprise survey research vendor by mid-fall 2024. As part of this evaluation, all campus units that rely on Qualtrics should review their current and future Qualtrics use. Regardless of the tool chosen through the RFP process, any forms built in Qualtrics that are currently being used for purposes outside of survey research projects will need to transition to other platforms before August 1, 2025. More information on the enterprise survey tool project, including alternative tools, is available on the EITS website: [https://eits.uga.edu/about/initiatives/survey\\_tool/](https://eits.uga.edu/about/initiatives/survey_tool/). For more information, contact Stacy Boyles at [stacy.boyles@uga.edu](mailto:stacy.boyles@uga.edu).
- *Submit requests for STF one-time funding:* Requests for proposals for the FY25 STF one-time funding process were distributed to deans and unit heads August 30, 2024. Units who receive base STF allocations are eligible to submit requests for proposals. This one-time funding is in addition to any support that a college or unit may receive as a part of its base STF allocation and must be of an instructional nature. The proposals must be submitted through the office of the appropriate Vice President, Dean, or Associate Provost by October 11, 2024, to be considered during the current cycle. Please direct comments or questions to Dr. Toby Graham, chair of the Student Technology Fee Advisory Committee at [tgraham@uga.edu](mailto:tgraham@uga.edu) or (706) 542-0621.
- *New Faculty Staff Technology Guide available:* The 2024-2025 Faculty Staff Guide for the academic year has been released. All faculty and staff received an email to their UGAMail in mid-August with the link to the new guide. The 2024-2025 guide can also be found here: [2024-2025 EITS Faculty Staff Technology Guide](#). If you would like a physical copy of the guide, they are available and can be mailed to you. To request a guide, reach out to Allyssa Robinson at [allyssa.robinson@uga.edu](mailto:allyssa.robinson@uga.edu).

## 2. Services for Students

- *Work continues on more than \$1M in campus wireless upgrades:* Work is underway on more wireless upgrades in academic buildings and student housing across the Athens, Buckhead, and Griffin campuses. These upgrades are part of EITS's work to continuously improve Wi-Fi connectivity and coverage to support teaching, learning, and student life. The \$1.2 million a year project, funded by Student Technology Fees, includes wireless refreshments and redesigns in many buildings. Wireless upgrades have been recently completed in the Chemistry building and are ongoing in the Holmes Hunter building. Technicians are also working on more improvements to other buildings and wireless spaces across campus; work for phase three is under way and expected to be completed next summer. In addition to campus buildings, EITS is installing wireless into the new emergency call stations being installed on campus. This is part of an effort by the university to increase security efforts. For more information, contact David Stewart at [stewart@uga.edu](mailto:stewart@uga.edu).

## 3. Services for Researchers

- *New Investments in High-Performance Computing to Advance AI Research Efforts at UGA:* To further expand services for UGA researchers utilizing AI, The Georgia Advanced Computing Resource Center (GACRC) deployed innovative, in-demand equipment to its High-Performance Computing cluster this summer. This \$2.4 million investment from the University of Georgia supports research computing needs for faculty in a variety of disciplines, including artificial intelligence and bioinformatics and is now available for use. EITS installed 26 new Graphical Processing Unit (GPU) compute nodes on the Sapelo2 cluster and three additional compute nodes with significant RAM memory (3TB) to address specific workloads. GPU compute nodes are highly specialized processors adept at specific mathematical operations. The investment in the nodes allows UGA researchers to experiment with AI approaches more rapidly, test new ideas, and refine AI models faster, while also enabling them to tackle more ambitious problems, and to foster collaborative projects across multiple disciplines. For more information about the Georgia Advanced Computing Resource Center, please visit <https://gacrc.uga.edu/> or contact Dr. Guy Cormier at [gcormier@uga.edu](mailto:gcormier@uga.edu).
- *GACRC buy-in program available for FY25:* The Vice President for Information Technology is continuing a program to encourage faculty to use the new cluster for the Georgia Advanced Computing Resource Center (GACRC). This program was offered in FY24 and has been extended to FY25 with an additional \$250,000 commitment from the Vice President for Information Technology. For more information, including details about the buy-in program, please contact Dr. Guy Cormier at [gcormier@uga.edu](mailto:gcormier@uga.edu).

## 4. Other General Services

- *Google to decommission Jamboard at the end of the year:* Effective December 31, 2024, Google will decommission Jamboard, their digital whiteboard that lets you collaborate in real time. Starting October 1, 2024, users will no longer be able to create new or edit existing Jams on any platform. Between October 1 and December 31, 2024, Google will place the app in “view-only” mode. During this time, users will be able to back up their Jam files. On December 31, 2024, users will no longer be able to access their Jam files and Google will permanently delete them. If you wish to keep your Jams, EITS suggests migrating them to Microsoft Whiteboard. To learn more about Google’s decommission of Jamboard, visit, <https://workspace.google.com/blog/product-announcements/next-phase-digital-whiteboarding> or contact Justin Sackett at [justin.sackett@uga.edu](mailto:justin.sackett@uga.edu).
- *AT&T Audio Conferencing Services Discontinued:* UGA has been informed by AT&T that their dial-in Audio Conferencing service will be discontinued by the end of this year. This service, which provided a toll-free number and access code for audio-only conference calls, will no longer be available after 2024. Telephone Services recommends that users switch to Teams or Zoom web meetings, as these tools are already accessible to all faculty and staff. If these options do not meet the needs of select users, Telephone Services will collaborate with AT&T to find alternative solutions with AT&T. For more information contact Dennis Flint, [dwflint@uga.edu](mailto:dwflint@uga.edu).

#### 5. Did you know?

- *Additional Zoom Booths available:* Initially installed as a pilot program at the Miller Learning Center and McBay Science Library, the increasing popularity of Zoom Booths among students has prompted UGA Libraries to add additional Zoom Booths at several library locations across campus. Zoom booths are now located at the Main Library, Miller Learning Center, and McBay Science Library. To ensure accessibility for all UGA Community members, an ADA-compliant booth has been installed at each location. These are open to all UGA students, faculty, and staff who need a quiet and enclosed space on campus to attend a zoom call, complete an exam, take an online job interview, or complete other sensitive tasks. Zoom Booths can be reserved online in 30-minute increments for up to two hours. Please visit <https://www.libs.uga.edu/zoom-booths> for more information regarding policies, specific locations and more.
- *Download Microsoft 365 for Free:* UGA offers free Microsoft 365 software to all eligible students, faculty, and staff. Eligible individuals can use their UGA MyID and password to download and install the software. The latest version can be installed on up to ten personal devices including computers, tablets, and phones with full functionality. Features include Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook, Publisher, Copilot, and more. Additionally, OneDrive cloud storage is available for accessing saved documents from anywhere. For assistance with installation, please contact the EITS Help Desk at 706-542-3106, email [helpdesk@uga.edu](mailto:helpdesk@uga.edu), or visit our Help Desk Knowledge Base for installation instructions.

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