

## Vice President for Information Technology Status and Activity Report for August 2016

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

### 1. Announcements for Faculty and Staff Meetings

- *New Collaborate Platform Available:* A new Blackboard Collaborate platform, called Collaborate Ultra, is now available. Users who have a Collaborate account have the option to select Ultra when they log in to Blackboard Collaborate. The new Collaborate Ultra runs completely in web browsers and does not require users to download or install a launcher. Collaborate Ultra features a new interface with a more modern look. Additional features include improved audio and video quality, and the option to upload and store content in advance of your session. Users will still have the option to use the previous Blackboard Collaborate version and access their previously archived content. Ultra is currently available to users with Collaborate accounts and will be available within eLearning Commons (eLC) starting in the fall semester. Additional information about Ultra will be provided soon. For more information about Collaborate Ultra, please contact Robert Ethier at [rethier@uga.edu](mailto:rethier@uga.edu).
- *SecureUGA Training for New Employees Available in eLC:* SecureUGA security awareness training has moved from its own web application to eLearning Commons (eLC). SecureUGA is an online, self-paced security awareness training program mandated by the University System of Georgia (USG). Like the mandated ethics training course, SecureUGA is now available in eLC. In addition, the requirements for which employees receive SecureUGA training have been revised, per an approval granted by the USG. In the past, SecureUGA training was required for all current UGA employees to complete on an annual basis. Under the revised requirements, SecureUGA training will primarily focus on new employees, who must complete the training within one month of employment. The revised requirements are currently in effect until February 2018. Additional information about SecureUGA, including user instructions, is available at [secure.uga.edu](http://secure.uga.edu). For questions about SecureUGA, please contact the Office of Information Security at [sate@uga.edu](mailto:sate@uga.edu).
- *Justin Willcox Named New Associate Director:* Justin Willcox has been named the associate director of IT Contracts and Licensing Administration (ITCLA) for EITS. ITCLA is responsible for negotiating EITS hardware, software, support and service procurements, maintaining relationships with key vendor partners and lowering the cost of software for UGA faculty, staff and students. Before accepting the position with EITS, Willcox worked with Client Services at the Office of Information Technology at the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences (FOIT). For more information about ITCLA and the services it provides, contact [itcla@uga.edu](mailto:itcla@uga.edu).

### 2. Support for Student Technology Services

- *UGA Mobile App Gets New Look, Navigation:* In response to student feedback, a new, redesigned version of the UGA Mobile App has been released to campus. The updated app features a new home screen that makes it easier for users to access the most popular features in the app. The bus trackers for UGA and Athens Transit have been updated to make it easier for users to navigate to help them find the nearest bus stops. Users may also access directions for walking around campus, as well as directions using the transit system. The app includes all of the current features, such as access to UGAMail, dining

hall menus and athletic scores, but in a new menu bar that is easier to navigate. The UGA Mobile App is free in the App Store and in Google Play. For more information on the UGA Mobile App redesign, contact Lance Peiper at [lpeiper@uga.edu](mailto:lpeiper@uga.edu).

### 3. Support for Academic and Administrative Computing

- *Office 365 Planner and Forms Available:* UGA students, faculty and staff now have access to two new web apps in Office 365: Forms, a survey tool and Planner, a project management tool. Forms allows users to create short surveys and quizzes, useful for event planner and gathering quick feedback. Planner allows users to create project plans, form groups, assign tasks to members of a group and collaborate on files. Both are accessible through the Office 365 app menu in your web-based UGAMail. For more information about Planner and Forms, contact Keith Martin at [keith.martin@uga.edu](mailto:keith.martin@uga.edu).

### 4. Support for Research

- *Buy-In Program Extended for Researchers:* The Vice President for Information Technology is continuing a matching program to encourage faculty to use the new cluster for the Georgia Advanced Computing Resource Center (GACRC). This program was offered the past two fiscal years and has been extended to FY17 with an additional \$100,000 commitment from the Vice President for Information Technology. The program provides an additional computing node at no cost to researchers who purchase through the options available in the buy-in program. For more information, including details about the buy-in program, please contact Dr. Guy Cormier, Director of Research Computing, at [gcormier@uga.edu](mailto:gcormier@uga.edu).

### 5. Data Reporting and Analytics

- *Well-Known Surveys Use Data Provided by OIR:* Each year, the Office of Institutional Research provides historical institutional data for about 50 national and international surveys. These surveys are often requested by media outlets for publications targeted prospective students and their parents. One of the most well-known surveys is conducted by U.S. News and World Report, but others include higher education institutions or agencies that assemble data for peer comparisons. For example, the Oklahoma State Faculty Salary survey reviews trends in faculty compensation across numerous institutions in the U.S. For the Office of Institutional Research, each request represents a commitment to ensuring the data is accurate and validated. For more information, contact Paul Klute at [pklute@uga.edu](mailto:pklute@uga.edu) or visit [oir.uga.edu](http://oir.uga.edu).
- *Strategic Vision for Visual Analytics Being Developed:* The Office of Institutional Research is revisioning how people can access and interact with data OIR maintains for the University. OIR is responsible for maintaining historical data for the institution, such as student enrollment figures and tuition costs. This information is often used to support the University's strategic planning efforts, accreditation self-studies, reporting requests and additional requests for leaders across the institution. Currently, OIR distributes its data through three primary sources: The printed Fact Book, the online FACTS system and various report requests. OIR is now planning how to repackage its data to be more user-friendly and dynamic for user interaction. Using a model based on visual analytics, the end result of this process will be a collection of data segments based on current interest for specific data. This project is in the planning phase and is expected to be launched during the 2016-2017 academic year. For more information, contact Paul Klute at [pklute@uga.edu](mailto:pklute@uga.edu).

## 6. Core Campus Infrastructure

- *Wireless Service Upgraded for Several Residence Halls:* EITS, in coordination with University Housing, has completed the upgrade of wireless service in nine residence halls. Since Spring Break, the following residence halls have had new wireless access points installed to provide greater wireless service: Russell Hall, Brumby Hall, Boggs Hall, Creswell Hall, Lipscomb Hall, Hill Hall, Church Hall, Mell Hall and Oglethorpe Hall. EITS and University Housing are currently planning the next phase of wireless upgrades for additional residence halls. These changes come after student feedback about wireless service in the residence halls. The upgrades are being funded by the Student Technology Fee. For more information, contact Kerri Testament at [kerriuga@uga.edu](mailto:kerriuga@uga.edu).
- *Buildings on College Station Road, Riverbend Road to be Impacted by Construction Project:* A project to replace the bridges on College Station Road in East Athens is expected to impact network and phone services to UGA buildings in the area later this month. At this time, anticipated dates and times of service disruptions are not known, but EITS will advise affected units and buildings in advance. The bridges being replaced have network and telephony infrastructure that serve UGA buildings in the College Station and Riverbend Roads areas. EITS is continuing to work with contractors and the Georgia Department of Transportation on identifying anticipated dates and times when network and phone services will be disrupted to buildings in the area. EITS will provide additional information as it becomes available. For questions, please contact Jeff Teasley at [jteasley@uga.edu](mailto:jteasley@uga.edu).

## 7. Did You Know?

Dr. Timothy M. Chester, Vice President of Information Technology, recently published an article about the potential uses for drones in higher education in the Educause Review, a bimonthly publication for the higher education IT community. The article explores the numerous possibilities for use of unmanned aircraft systems in academic environments, from creating programs aimed at UAS design and construction to finding ways to use them in traditional research. The full article can be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/gwsrttz>.

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