



# WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

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**Unit Leader:** Carl Porter, Executive Director of Academic Support Centers and Programs

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**Person(s) Responsible for Preparing this Report:**

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**1. Analysis of Student Affairs Technology (SAT)**

- a. SAT is providing high-quality and effective programs and services. This is based upon the use of limited staff resources to support the numerous students utilizing the services offered by the Division of Student Affairs.
- b. SAT is aligned with the mission statements of the Student Affairs Division and University. There should be enhancements regarding the evidence-based process in which the SAT mission is aligned. SAT provides specific services to Student Affairs that are not available through the IT Division.
- c. In order to increase knowledge and understanding of SAT in the Division of Student Affairs, the following should be undertaken:
  1. Communicate regularly with the Division through information updates sent by the Director of SAT.
  2. Ask the Director of SAT to attend SAMC meetings, on a quarterly basis, to inform the Division's management about technology projects requested and status of those underway.
  3. Publish regular updates about projects and lab/testing center utilization on the Student Affairs website.
  4. The SAT self-study document could be improved by adding a brief history of SAT's evolution.
- d. From a national perspective, SAT faces issues similar to other SAT departments, such as:
  1. Collaboration with the institution's central IT Division.
  2. Adequate number of technology staff to support a significant sized division such as Student Affairs.
  3. Meeting a diverse range of technology needs identified by the Division.
  4. Having the ability to develop a strategic plan for technology given the quick pace in which technology changes.
  5. Funds to pay student staff appropriately without experiencing high turnover.
  6. Communications with customers regarding projects requested, prioritized, and undertaken.
  7. Communicating what SAT can and cannot do to assist the Division, given the resources available.

**2. Programs/Services Offered**

- a. Through the four main units of SAT, the services offered/functions performed by the department are broad:
  1. Management of Computer Labs and Testing Centers.
  2. Desktop Support.
  3. Server Support.
  4. Custom Applications Development/Maintenance.
  5. Website Development/Maintenance.
  6. Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) Support.
  7. Network Security.
  8. Network Administration.
  9. Data Management/Database Administration.
  10. System Administration.

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11. Technology Purchases.
12. Planning.
13. Project Management.
14. Personnel Development.
15. Budgeting.

### **3. Strengths**

SAT has much strength that enables the department to be successful in accomplishing its mission and goals.

- a. Use of Student VOICE surveys at the end of semester with students to establish lab hours, equipment needs, and other student input.
- b. Student development of student workers – Lab Aides, Student Technology Assistants.
- c. Good record keeping for non unique numbers of student use.
- d. Full knowledge of labs.
- e. Measures include the housing of servers in a secure area, as well as creating databases, firewalls, and password policies that protect against access of student/staff directory information, educational records and personally identifiable information.
- f. Websites designed to convey constituency appropriate information for services and programs adhering to University standards.
- g. Testing data is kept confidential in order to protect students, faculty and staff, as well as the University.
- h. Flexibility of allowing students to allow them to do what they need to in order to be academically successful.
- i. Fast turnaround with keeping labs up and running. Few computers, if any, are down for extended periods.
- j. Creativity in using student workers to develop applications to assist student users (i.e., iPod Application to identify open labs based on utilization).
- k. Longevity of service for the full-time staff.

### **4. Concerns**

There are some concerns regarding the future of SAT's ability to support the needs of students and staff of the Student Affairs Division.

- a. Lampros Lab repurposed for Math development use.
- b. Use of lab space is out of SAT control, dependent on Deans' decisions/building owners.
- c. Wages for student staff in a division that has 200+ student workers.
- d. Salaries for full-time staff may not be in line with similar technology jobs in the government sector; this could become a retention issue.
- e. Four to five staff with specialized knowledge that would be difficult to duplicate in case of their absence or moving to another position.

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**5. Recommendations**

SAT would benefit from undertaking the following recommendations:

- a. Future Plans
  1. Develop a description of where the department would like to be in five years (including a list of program improvement goals) and the department's strategy for achieving this vision.
  2. Identify as much as possible who is responsible for each anticipated action item.
  3. Include a copy of materials submitted for capital improvements and line-item budget requests.
- b. Lab
  1. Improve marketing of lab use/availability.
  2. Use Student VOICE surveys to have followups to document outcomes of student accomplishments by using the labs. Use goal targeted surveys throughout the year.
  3. Address at a campus level, the role of Student Affairs in allocating computer lab space.
  4. Set goals for SAT and use VOICE surveys to evaluate if goals are being met.
- c. Procedures
  1. Improve project management – they feel stretched thin but cannot substantiate it. This would help SAT communicate their needs better.
  2. Adopt IT industry standards for project tracking/management practices.
  3. Research and adopt applicable industry standard IT processes (i.e., ITIL).
  4. Have a long term support plan for applications developed by student workers.
  5. Gain input from SAMC regarding technology projects of greatest impact in the Division.
  6. Formalize a technology purchase process for the Division to ensure standard purchase of hardware and software. This would also ensure long term impacts of a purchase are addressed.
  7. Document procedures with Wildcard system support in case Chip is unavailable.
  8. Have written standards for hardware and software.
  9. Have written procedures for STAs.
  10. Have written procedures for Wildcard system to ensure PCI compliance.
  11. Create and maintain a document that lists all projects that have been requested that have not been undertaken. This would be used to have a record of needs and possibly focus on a staffing plan.
- d. Staff
  1. Utilize benchmarks for IT staffing based on support of SA Division staff.
  2. Identify staff in SA departments to maintain websites using the WSU content management system to distribute the work. SAT staff could assist designated department staff as needed.
  3. Complete a skills inventory for full-time staff and an inventory of what applications/systems each staff supports.
  4. Define functional roles of staff.
  5. Identify IT training/certifications that the full-time staff could use in their roles with SAT to develop an enhanced career path in the organization.

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- e. Hardware/Software
1. Relocate servers near Dave's office to the IT Co-location Facility when the space becomes available. Ensure SAT has SLA with the IT Division and access to the facility.
    - (i) The servers currently located in SC are on battery backup (UPS) systems with no generator backup, this means limited runtime in the event of a prolonged power outage to the SC building. In addition, the building network infrastructure is likely not on UPS and/or generator. In the event of a power outage on the Ogden campus all customers at remote campuses or on the Internet will be unable to access services provided by these servers.
    - (ii) Contact the IT Division and establish a timeline for when space will be available.
    - (iii) Moving systems to the IT Co-location facility does not mean IT will be managing these systems. This would only be the case if the Service Level Agreement (SLA) states such. A typical SLA for customers in a Co-location facility is power (redundant if desired), A/C, network, and 24/7 electronic key access to the physical space. Additional services such as central monitoring of systems or remote hands would be established on a case by case basis.
  2. Evaluate hardware/software replacement plans for testing centers and computer labs.
  3. Create a replacement plan for SA servers.
    - (i) Having a server replacement plan will help SA to know the total cost of a service SAT is supporting. In addition it will enable the full life cycle of a service to be budgeted for.
  4. Create a back up process for SA servers.
    - (i) A backup strategy should be created to ensure all business critical data can be backed up and restored in the event of a server crash, file corruption, or accidental deletion. RAID is only a high availability tool not a back up strategy. A tested backup/restore process is a key component of a good disaster recovery and business continuity plan.
  5. Create a disaster/recovery (DR) plan for production SA servers and test the plan at least once a year. When creating a DR plan, questions to ask are:
    - (i) Which services are critical to the SA division's day to day business?
    - (ii) Can we function if there were a major loss from fire, flood, or other catastrophic loss of these services? What about minor disruptions such as power outages even when on redundant power?
    - (iii) How quickly would each service need to be back in production to not hinder ability of the University and SA division to complete their mission?
    - (iv) Do some services have specific legal or regulatory up-time accessibility requirements would they need to have priority over other services?
- f. Other
1. Include a history of how SAT has developed in the self-study document.
  2. Create a technology committee to gather ideas about using technology in the Division. Committee membership could include technical or non-technical staff. The committee could report to the VP of Student Affairs.
  3. Poll the Student Affairs staff on their use of SAT services. Is it clear to the staff of what SAT does vs. what the IT Division does?
  4. Develop a strategic plan for technology in the Division using best practices, industry standards, and technology trends.

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**6. Next Steps**

a. Followup Items

The following questions should be answered to increase understanding of SAT's support of the Division:

1. What are the characteristics of Lab users?
2. What is the utilization of unique lab users?
3. What are peak utilization times for all labs?
4. How much is used for classroom use vs. open lab time?
5. Gain input from SAMC or Directors regarding their interactions with SAT.
6. Does SAT have a procedures manual for STAs?

**7. Supplementary Materials**

Preparing the following supplementary materials will assist SAT evaluate staffing and support needs.

- a. A list of major departmental accomplishments over the last five years.
- b. Inventories (Sample documents for items 2 to 4 will be provided separately.):
  1. Describe where the data are stored and how they can be retrieved (raw and analyzed forms), so that others outside the department, can access the information.
  2. Staff Skill Inventory
  3. Benchmark of IT Staff Needed to Support the Division
  4. Systems Support Matrix
  5. Project Tracking Log