2020 Year in Review

“The university has always relied on technology, but this year IT was more essential than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic brought many new challenges, including the rapid transition to working, teaching, and learning remotely. As an IT community, we are very proud of the ingenuity, collaboration, hard work, and resilience that helped make it possible for the University of Iowa to continue to operate and thrive throughout these unprecedented times.”

- Associate Vice President and CIO Steve Fleagle
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COVID Response

Information technology has always been critical to the university mission and its day-to-day operations, but the institution counted on the IT community more than ever during the pandemic. OneIT worked very hard to adapt, innovate, and deliver essential IT services throughout this period of rapid change.

Remote teaching and learning

- The Office of Teaching, Learning, and Technology partnered with Distance and Online Education to create a new, cross-functional team called the UI Remote Instruction Team (RIT). This new collaboration provided seamless support to faculty and instructors moving between in-person and online course-delivery modes.
- In addition to creating the From Pandemic to Planned website, the team offered customized support, Zoom drop-in sessions, and workshops and college-specific training sessions on a variety of topics, which are recorded and available to watch later.
- Since mid-April, the RIT has provided more than 360 individual faculty and instructor consultations and training sessions, with 1,868 attendees. These resources were critical to maintaining a quality education for all students during the spring and fall semesters.
- The RIT developed the Keep Teaching and Keep Learning websites to share resources for remote instruction and learning.
- The Learning Spaces Technology team outfitted 330 classrooms with additional cameras and A/V equipment for remote learning.
- The Division of Student Life and ITS developed a centralized system so students could reserve spaces to take remote courses or participate in private online appointments on campus. 16,370 reservations were made.

Data solutions and administrative systems

- The Data Analytics and Insights (DAI) team helped the university use data to evaluate virtual course readiness and student virtual course engagement, as well as financial impacts of COVID.
- Administrative Information Systems also developed institutional dashboards for monitoring COVID-related metrics, including a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT), self-reporting form, and collegiate student absence impact dashboards.
- Enhancements were made to the student information system (MAUI/MyUI) and HR systems to support changes and new processes related to COVID-19.

Shift to a remote work environment

- ITS, like many other units, transitioned to having most of its staff work remotely, with the exception of critical work that must be performed on-site. This transition occurred over a two-week period in March, supporting the campus through the rapid shift to online working, teaching, and learning as we too were navigating the changes.
- IT professionals adapted to new ways of working with each other, our customers, and our campus partners.
- The Extended Technical Support (ETS) Team and the ITS Help Desk team delivered essential desktop support to thousands of students, faculty, and staff throughout the pandemic.
• IT support professionals were integral in the transition to a remote work environment, maintaining computers and other equipment and supporting a significant increase in the use of online collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business, and Zoom.

• Between March and December 2020, there were 909,000 Zoom meetings and 2100 webinars. There were 6.5 million meeting participants and nearly 118,000 webinar participants. The total number of meeting minutes was 336,488,632.

• With the Office of the Dean of Students, ETS also implemented a program that loaned laptops to 200 students for online learning.

• ITS created the Working Remotely website to share resources throughout the change.

Outdoor and Drive-up Wifi

• Enterprise Infrastructure deployed a Drive-up Wi-Fi service and expanded outdoor wireless, allowing students, faculty, and staff to access high-speed internet without entering campus buildings.

• The Physical Infrastructure, Network Engineering Services, and Project Management Office teams in ITS were essential to the success of this project, which delivered drive-up Wi-Fi service at five locations and enhanced outdoor wireless in heavily traveled spaces, such as the Pentacrest, the T. Anne Cleary Walkway, Hubbard Park, the Iowa Memorial Union terrace, and other locations.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Racial justice issues were highlighted over the last year as violence against Black individuals by authorities continued and movements such as Black Lives Matter raised their voices to be heard. These events prompted significant dialog around the nation, across campus, and in our organization. They raised awareness and reinforced the importance of ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion activities.

Statement and discussions

- On June 5, OneIT issued a statement against cruelty, racism, violence.
- On June 10, the IT community joined in a nationwide day of reflection to promote deeper understanding of racism through self-reflection, reading, listening, and learning to equip ourselves to address the changes that are needed at this moment.
- This period of social unrest prompted important questions and discussions at staff forums for IT professionals, and DEI continues to be a topic of conversation at our Listening Posts and other meetings and events.

Action plan

- Even before the events of the summer, OneIT had developed plans to work toward reducing unintended consequences of policies and practices and improving outcomes for our diverse community.
- We will continue to move things forward with our OneIT DEI Action Plan, modeled after the campus-wide DEI plan, with specific strategies and critical tasks identified for OneIT.
  - The plan was shared broadly across OneIT for feedback, and activities were prioritized.
  - Tasks aimed at improving inclusive hiring, retention, and communication topped the list.

Progress

- Some of the DEI efforts and trainings throughout the year included:
  - Inclusive language changes on public-facing websites
  - Inclusive language changes in underlying code
  - Inclusive pedagogical techniques in faculty events
  - Participation in BUILD program and National Coalition Building Institute trainings
  - Participation in virtual sessions by the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As an IT community, we stand against racism, cruelty, and violence in any form. Imperative that we strive to ensure that everyone is valued and respected, and that we share a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

We realize this is a journey and we are just at the beginning, but we are committed to making progress toward a better future for all.”
Research

As research continued throughout the pandemic, and as new COVID-related projects were born, research computing services and administrative research systems were enhanced.

- A new Research Data Collaboration Service ([https://its.uiowa.edu/rdcs](https://its.uiowa.edu/rdcs)) enabled researchers to move data and collaborate with peers more easily during the pandemic.
- Research Services Workshops for R, Jupyter, and HPC transitioned to virtual sessions and saw increased enrollment.
- Researchers focusing on COVID-19 research had access to dedicated computational resources on the Argon computing cluster.
- The Interactive Data Analytics Service was used for educational purposes by 800 students across 32 courses for assignments, projects, and exams.
- Research Information Systems supported Sponsored Programs in processing record-breaking funding proposals, contracts, and awards while working entirely remote.
- Enhancements to the animal research information system (ARIS) added the ability for labs to order animals online rather than by phone call.

Collaboration with Health Care IT

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, great progress was made on collaboration across OneIT and Health Care Information Systems. These projects began in 2018. The goal of increased collaboration is to provide a more seamless experience for IT users while providing IT services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

- All Skype for Business service for the campus is now being delivered by HCIS
- All health care email accounts are being moved to Office 365, a service delivered by ITS
- OneIT has joined HCIS in utilizing Cherwell to manage services and requests for support, making it easier to pass customer requests across the organizations as necessary
- Relationships continue to form and grow - We have held several joint events, had a joint MOR IT Leadership Program cohort, and developed the SPARK experiential learning program.
Uniting the OneIT community

The pandemic required the IT community to adapt to working together in new ways and find new ways to develop and maintain relationships. Extra effort was made on many levels to help people stay connected personally and professionally as many worked remotely and rarely saw colleagues face-to-face.

Virtual events

- In March we initiated regular CIO Listening Posts – virtual all-staff meetings to share rapidly changing information and answer staff questions. About 350 people regularly attend and the events have been highly valued by the IT community. Twenty-seven Listening Posts were held and nearly 300 questions were answered.

- Turnout at other online events has been strong as well, as the virtual option made it easier for people to attend and the culture has adapted to and recognized some positives of gathering virtually. Over 200 attendees joined roadmap review sessions, and IT Leadership Development events drew large online crowds. The online holiday gathering included Zoom breakout rooms focused on holiday trivia, holiday traditions, holiday recipes and more.

Derecho support

- A team of IT professionals led a grassroots effort to help colleagues and community members impacted by the July derecho. Employees helped one another with cleanup, donated supplies and money, and offered emotional support.

Trunk-o-Treat

- Many children safely (with masks, maintaining social distance) gathered for goodies at the Halloween Trunk-o-Treat.

“Thanks to all who worked to organize events and come up with creative ways to celebrate.”
Recognition

OneIT staff are dedicated, talented, and hard-working. Thank you for your service and for everything you did in this year of unprecedented challenges to keep the campus running. We are also excited to welcome the new colleagues who joined OneIT teams in 2020.

Longevity awards

40 years
- Pete Brokaw

35 years
- Mark Smellie
- Steve Carneol
- Diana Lynch
- Danial Roach
- Bradley Gunnells
- Boyd Knosp
- David Funk
- Christopher Fomon
- Vicki Donovan
- Bryan Cooling
- Steve Jaeger
- Bob Eubanks

25 years
- Dwight Barnes
- Greg Schwartz
- Brenda Scott
- Jan Knebel
- John Winget
- Jenifer Steil

20 years
- Christopher Piker
- Bill Evanson
- Mark Weber
- Jodi Scholl
- Viki Mueller
- Matthew Bielicke
- James Robinson
- Jen O’Rourke Steckly
- Erick Chamberlin
- Edward Nealson
- Kim Kuebrich Yordi

15 years
- Hao Geng
- David Heitbrink
- Jerrett Ferguson
- Canan Tapia
- Peter Yohe
• Isaac Podolefsky
• Timothy Smith
• William Bacher
• Neil Johnson
• Timothy Barker
• Christopher Dibbern
• Ben Speare
• Jinghui Li
• Philip Maul
• Karen Noggle
• Steve Tomblin

10 years
• Rick Porter
• Nick Bell
• Ryan Nenninger
• Ashley Comer
• Ted Fitzgerald
• Rachel Gold
• Heath Davis
• James Dasen
• Brandelle Unkrich
• Brian Finley
• Michael Kane
• Brendan Hanks
• Derek Barnard

5 years
• Aaron Walker
• Griffin Idleman
• Cyrus Coffman

• Amarnadh Oleti
• Michael Toyne
• Sai Ramadugu
• Chik-Iun Woo
• David Brown
• Jeremy Stoltenberg
• Katie Kahler
• Laura Jacobus
• Em Domingues
• Emily McKeag
• Christopher Grycki
• Mark Howe
• Robert Morris
• Matthew Swanson
• Michael McIntyre
• Daniel Borderes
• Cody Droz
• Jacob Ricke
• Jamie Matthews
• Jeremy Dombrock
• Vanessa Weisskopf
• Isaac Helgens
• Bradley Carson
• Dawn Moore
• Zachary Hill
• Anna Flaming
• Thomas Wilford
• Joseph Kirkpatrick
• Kristian Thompson
• Zach Furst
Retirements
• Dennis Rublaitus
• Pete Brokaw
• John Witt
• John Marmet

New employees

Administrative Information Systems
• Elizabeth Koppes
• Pragati Tanwar
• Spencer Gritton
• Brian Smith
• Duane Staskal

Enterprise Infrastructure
• Steven Ludovissy
• Brandon Marthers
• James Holmes
• Andrew Millson
• Kanayo Ojobor
• Trevor Youngberg
• Jack Moeller
• Monsio Neepaye
• Austin Stumpf
• Jeff Gillitzer

Information Security and Policy Office
• Michael McIntyre
• Wade Stutzman
• Justin Evans

• Matthew Espy
• Scott Stiegelmeyer
• Michael McIntyre
• Devon Hess
• Shawn Garner
• Scott Gardner
• Troy Beneke
• Rick Deerberg

Enterprise Services
• Daniel Bermudez
• Dallas Petersen
• Michael Graham
• Michael Kirby
• Katherine Borchert
• Cory Skeers
• Ronald Troester
• Shehzad Gill
• Donald Lyon
• Ariel Godwin

Office of Teaching, Learning, and Technology
• Katherine Beydler
• Jonna Higgins-Freese
• Manda Marshall

Research Services
• Elizabeth Leake

College of Public Health
• Azadeh Khoddami

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Regents awards

Mike Kaplan and Tracy Scott received Board of Regents Staff Excellence Awards in recognition of extraordinary contributions that significantly benefited the university and the state of Iowa.

Mike Kaplan

As the director of HR systems and analytics in AIS, Mike was nominated for leadership, outstanding service, responsiveness, and his ability to envision and implement solutions to complex problems.

Tracy Scott

As the senior IT director for service management and support in ITS Enterprise Services, Tracy was nominated for his dedication to the institution, discipline, and work ethic, along with the key role he played in transforming IT at the UI in recent years.
Essential workers

The year 2020 was unlike any Hawkeyes have experienced in our university’s 173-year history. Essential workers in our health care operations selflessly provided incredible care for Iowans while others across campus worked tirelessly to keep buildings open and safe, provide quality education to our students, and keep other essential operations running smoothly. Three IT professionals were featured in Iowa Now, representing the essential work that so many IT professionals across campus stepped up to contribute during COVID.

Ben Held

Ben Held, senior IT support consultant in ITS, provides desktop support to the Office of the President and Office of the Provost and leads a team of consultants who support many other units. He is one of 60 members of the Extended Technical Support Team, which delivered essential desktop support throughout the pandemic.

Vicky Maloy

Vicky Maloy, assistant director of academic technologies in OTLT, is part of the OTLT team that partnered with Distance and Online Education to create the UI Remote Instruction Team, which provided seamless support to instructors moving between course-delivery modes.

Mike Toyne

Mike Toyne, communication infrastructure engineer in ITS, and his colleagues deployed a Drive-Up Wi-Fi Service and expanded outdoor wireless, allowing students, faculty, and staff to access high-speed internet without entering campus buildings.

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What’s Ahead

Detailed plans for IT projects in the coming year are available in the OneIT Roadmaps, but here are a few areas of focus for 2021.

Student success

Leverage, data, research, and instructional assessment to foster student success, and adopt flexible, effective physical and online learning environments.

Research

Continue to improve high-performance computing, and develop and improve services for data science, analytics, artificial intelligence, and machine

Remote work

Continue to support the campus and our staff through transitions to new kinds of work arrangements in a more remote, post-pandemic world.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Emphasize that DEI is critical and promote an inclusive culture, enhance the campus environment for inclusion and accessibility, and embed DEI in recruitment and retention.

IT Security

Continue to invest in and enhance our defenses against escalating cybersecurity threats.