

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Washington Strategic Roadmap for Information Management and Administrative Systems sets forth a long-term, comprehensive plan for the future.

The plan defines a vision for UW information management and administrative systems (IM/AS) aligned with the institution's business goals and priorities. It outlines an action plan with five key initiatives to meet the enormous range of challenges the UW faces in providing the administrative systems and information needed to support a complex, diverse, and global institution.

The plan provides a framework for future decision making, prioritization, and resource allocation. Most importantly, the plan positions the University for the future in an era of increasing competition and rapid change.

THE CHALLENGE

The plan was initiated in the fall of 2007 at the request of the Board of Deans and Chancellors, the Information Management Advisory Committee, and other key stakeholders. It addresses the following critical challenges:

- **The UW's aging legacy systems cannot support this institution's 21st century business and information needs.**

The University's roughly 27-year-old systems have limited functionality and

are becoming increasingly difficult to upgrade. Departments and units have developed hundreds of redundant shadow systems to compensate for missing functionality, at considerable cost and effort. Operational inefficiencies are negatively impacting the productivity of people at every level.

- **The University community cannot get the information it needs to support effective decision-making.**

Even basic information—such as student headcount by major or financial resources for a given fiscal period—takes an extraordinary effort to obtain. Lack of institutional definitions for data as basic as “student FTE” or “faculty FTE” undermines the accuracy of the information and creates confusion.

- **The UW has underinvested in its administrative systems and fallen behind its peers.**

Among the UW's peer group of over 30 research/doctorate institutions, only one has financial systems older than the UW's.

THE PROCESS

The Roadmap was developed in response to the findings of the IS Futures Task Force, which was charged by the Provost in 2006 to evaluate long-term UW information technology needs and make recommendations.

The Task Force determined that the UW did not have a clear vision or long-term strategic plan for the future of IM/AS. As a result, there was no institutional context for prioritizing projects or allocating resources, and no framework for understanding how individual requests would help meet the UW's future needs.

More than 170 stakeholders from across the UW community were involved in developing the Roadmap. This effort was coordinated by the Office of Information Management, with the Information Management Advisory Committee serving as the project's steering committee.



Teams of stakeholders representing schools, colleges, campuses, medical centers, deans, faculty, researchers, and central administrators delved into the detail of the UW's current systems and processes, evaluating challenges and identifying risks. They developed a vision of where the University needs to be in ten years and outlined an action plan for getting there.

For the first time, thanks to their work, the University has a comprehensive, in-depth view of its current IM/AS challenges and a clear path forward.

**THE ROADMAP PLAN—
A COMPREHENSIVE
SOLUTION**

The Roadmap recommends five key initiatives to meet the UW's business and information needs into the future:

- Information for Decision Making:**
Develop the common data definitions, infrastructure, tools, and training necessary to provide access to accurate, useful information and analysis.
- Replace the Base:**
Replace the UW's aging legacy administrative systems with flexible, modern systems that can keep pace with rapidly changing business and information needs. Legacy systems include finance, budget, procurement, HR/payroll, and student administration.
- Redesign Processes:**
Design consistent, streamlined business processes to leverage new technologies, achieve increased operational efficiencies, and manage change.
- Enhance and Renew Systems:**
Invest in ongoing enhancement, development, and technology renewal of all core administrative systems to keep up with changing business needs. This includes systems supporting research, alumni/development, and facilities and space. It also includes continuing to invest in high-value, interim upgrades to legacy systems until those systems are replaced.

- Prioritize and Make Decisions:**
Develop a transparent decision-making process and a mature portfolio management framework. Enable collaborative projects across units. This will enable the UW to set institutional priorities for IM/AS, make strategic choices, and maximize investments.



Taken together, these five initiatives address the key challenges the UW is facing today with IM/AS. The UW must make progress on all of them to meet its needs moving forward. An important guiding principle in approaching this work is to invest in the best solution for each major business area, rather than commit to a single technology, vendor, or approach.

WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

Implementing this plan will involve significant investment. To provide some context for the difficult decisions ahead, it is useful to look at what other peer institutions and the state of Washington are doing. The trend over the past ten years has been to replace legacy administrative systems with vendor provided Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, such as PeopleSoft (now Oracle).

More recently, some universities are joining consortia to develop community source administrative systems specifically designed for higher education. The table below shows what some peer institutions are doing in this area. Numbers included are preliminary estimates from the institutions' Web sites and are provided for context only.

The state of Washington recently implemented a vendor solution from SAP for HR/payroll at a cost of approximately \$67 million. The state is currently considering replacing its legacy financial system and is looking at SAP as an option. The UW has begun discussions with the state to better understand its plans and will continue those discussions as it evaluates its options.

Approach	Organization (system)	Cost \$
Vendor Solution		
Banner	Illinois (finance, HR, student)	\$180m
Oracle	Michigan (finance, HR, student)	\$100m—\$125m
	Minnesota (finance, HR, student)	\$125m—\$150m
	Indiana (HR, student)	\$100m
SAP	MIT (finance, payroll)	\$200m
Consortium		
Kuali	U of Arizona (finance, research) UC Berkeley (student)	\$10m plus \$10m—\$15m
Homegrown		
Legacy Mainframe	UCLA, UCSD	Not available

Numbers included are preliminary estimates from the institutions' Web sites, and not final. They are provided for context only.

It is time to move from discussion to action—to commit to the investments necessary to position the University of Washington for the future.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Discussions with the Information Management Advisory Committee, the University Technology Advisory Committee, the Board of Deans and Chancellors, and other key stakeholders have led to the following recommended approach for implementing the Roadmap in the near-term:

- **Move forward with replacing the financial system.**
Explore possible partnerships, including with the state, as well as other options.
- **Join the Quali Student partnership.**
The UW should become a partner in the Quali Student higher education consortium. Other founding partners include the University of California at Berkeley and the University of British Columbia.
- **Invest in high-value enhancements.**
Move forward with the enhancements as funding allows.
- **Identify a long-term funding strategy to implement the Roadmap initiatives.**

Other next steps for the Roadmap include communicating findings and conclusions with the UW community and moving ahead with the “Prioritize and Make Decisions” initiative to make the governance of IM/AS more coordinated, collaborative, and cohesive.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE

For the past two decades, the UW has made a strategic decision to invest its limited resources in research and academic computing. This strategy has enabled the UW to build a technology infrastructure that has given it a competitive edge in research and learning.

This strategy, however, resulted in decades of underinvestment in IM/AS that is now taking its toll. Aging systems are creating inefficiencies that negatively impact the productivity of people at all levels of the University.

UW leaders cannot get the information they need to manage effectively. The systems are becoming so complex that only a handful of staff understands them, and it is increasingly more difficult to make necessary changes.

Further delay in replacing these systems will result in lost opportunities, higher costs, and continued erosion of the UW’s competitive edge.

Up to this point, the UW has been able to maintain its core systems on a small and unpredictable budget. This funding model will not support the capital investments needed to move to a new generation of systems. A sustainable, predictable funding plan is needed to implement the Roadmap initiatives and support the technology renewal necessary to keep systems current.

The University does not need the world’s greatest payroll or accounts payable system. It needs modern, flexible systems and information to support a complex, global University that has been recognized as one of the world’s best.

It is time to move from discussion to action—to commit to the investments necessary to position the University of Washington for the future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UW Strategic Roadmap Web site
www.washington.edu/provost/oim/roadmap/report/

OIM Web site
www.washington.edu/provost/oim/

OIM Highlights, April 28, 2008
www.washington.edu/provost/oim/reports/OIM_Highlights_Apr08.pdf