

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN³

A. ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS, AND DESCRIPTION OF ANALYSIS PROCESS-

The University has undertaken a number of planning projects in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. These include:

- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Self Study (SACS), completed in 1995, and involving faculty, staff, and students at the University;
- The Report of the Commission on the Future of the University, completed in 1998, and involving faculty, staff, students and leaders from the community, business, and industry;
- The Strategic Plan for the University, completed in 1999, included faculty, staff, student, and alumni representation;
- The office of Technology Resources Comprehensive Master Technology Plan, completed in 2000, and involving faculty, staff, students, and administration; and finally,
- The Faculty Technology Survey, completed 2001, which involved all full time faculty and administrators.

Institutional Strengths

The following Comprehensive Development Plan is based on the outcomes of the foregoing planning activities and provides information on academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability at the University of Southern Mississippi. The strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems or threats identify through this comprehensive planning process are presented for each of these three areas. Where current actions are being taken to deal with the problem, the actions are described.

Academic Programs

Strengths

The strength of the University of Southern Mississippi's academic programs is reflected in its external accreditation, national recognition, administrative commitment, and an ongoing planning process. The University offers 67 bachelor's degree programs,

³ *The University of Southern Mississippi Fact Book of 1999-2000.*

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48 master's degree programs, two specialist's degree programs, and 17 doctoral degree programs. The institution itself is accredited by the Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and has 98 individual programs of study accredited by a variety of agencies.

A number of programs at the University of Southern Mississippi have achieved national recognition, including the College of Arts, Honors College, the Polymer Science Research Center, and the College of Marine Sciences. The USM College of The Arts, one of only a few such colleges nation-wide to have established national accreditation in all of its degree programs offerings, theater, dance, music, art, and presents more than three hundred performances, exhibits, and other arts events each year. The University's faculty and students are frequently invited to perform both here and abroad. Facilities such as Bennett Auditorium, the Mannoni Performing Arts Center, the Hartwig Arena Theatre, Marsh Hall, and the Woods Arts Gallery have allowed USM to become the cultural center of south Mississippi. The new theater and dance building opened in 1999 and is the largest in the state. Programs such as the London Theater Tour and the summer Southern Arena Repertory Theatre afford students special educational opportunities.

With one of the oldest Honors program in the nation, the University offers undergraduates of superior academic ability a broadly-based education that seeks to combine the advantages of a large comprehensive university with the attractive components of a small liberal arts college: small classes, outstanding faculty, special scholarships, opportunities for independent study and special activities, and personal attention.

The internationally recognized USM Polymer Science Research Center is one of a few polymer programs that offer the B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees. Recently the graduate program was ranked third in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*. Annually, the Center awards almost \$35,000 in undergraduate scholarships and obtains approximately \$4 million in external grants. The Mississippi Polymer Institute, housed within the Department of Polymer Science, was funded by the Mississippi Legislature in 1993 in order to offer technical service to existing industry within the State and to attract more polymer companies to Mississippi.

One of the major strengths of the University as related to academic programs is the commitment of the Provost to a formal planning and review process to develop excellence in programs. The strategic plan titled, “A National University for the Gulf South,” creates a vision that focuses on the importance of all university sites and the use of new technologies in providing greater access to students diverse in ethnicity and race, gender, age, economics background, and academic preparation.

The University has recently obtained the status of a Carnegie Research Doctoral “Extensive” university, an indication of the overall quality of the programs offered at USM. This classification enhances the external profile of the institution by indicating that it is committed to excellence in teaching, research and sponsored programs activity, as well as the economic development of the area.

USM is an institution experienced in the application of technology for cost containment and the furtherance of its academic and strategic goals. The University’s multi-site structure has prompted the use of technology to address administrative, programmatic, and communication issues across its campuses. The University supports its commitment to technology utilization by continuing to improve its software, equipment, physical facilities, and library resources. Moreover, the University is committed to using appropriate technologies to deliver programs more effectively and improve efficiency at all work levels. The Office of Technology Resources (OTR) is responsible for the University’s technology units, including networking, instructional support, telecommunications, computer laboratories, academic computing, administrative systems management, and customer relations into one unified organization.

In the fall of 1997, the Office of Technology Resources at USM produced its annual Short Term Implementation Plan (STIP), which provides a global and comprehensive review of the full spectrum of campus technology; this plan was updated and reissued in Fall 1998, Fall 1999, and Fall 2000.

Geared toward resolution of problems that require immediate attention, the STIP acts as a “reality check” on the evolution of technology at USM. It specifies future developments in and direction for the technological support of administrative, teaching, and research initiatives—including but not limited to computing, networking, budget consolidation, and transmission of voice, video, and data. Capturing the full context of

the complex array of plans, organizational units, programs, and services, the STIP recommends substantive ways to enhance The University of Southern Mississippi's mission, strategies, goals, and objectives through technological support.

In addition to addressing needs in the current operational year, the Short Term Implementation Plan was used to generate a five year plan for campus technology: the Comprehensive Technology Master Plan (CTMP). Both the STIP and CTMP will be revised annually, ensuring that, as technologies change and the University develops, the plans will shift to mirror and lead that reality.

During the next decade, The University of Southern Mississippi must strive to develop an integrated information processing architecture that encompasses host systems, departmental systems, and end user workstations. By tapping the power of technology to facilitate communication, USM will promote greater coordination between administrative and academic spheres. Such an extensive enterprise requires meticulous and timely strategic planning—from network infrastructure to software implementation—and the ongoing evolution of the STIP and the CTMP is central to such planning.

The challenge that USM will undertake through the use of instructional technologies will be to strategically apply technology to:⁴

- serve increasing numbers of students in targeted academic programs in the General Education Curriculum, with a focus on Humanities, while advancing the goal of increased faculty efficiency and cost containment.
- improve faculty productivity and cost containment through the elimination of related expenses, e.g., travel time and other offsite program delivery costs, specifically for the Mississippi Gulf Coast region that lacks a public four year college or university;
- improve time-to-degree by offering classes not otherwise easily accessible; and
- serve more fully a multi-site campus and their respective constituencies through open learning delivery systems.

The University has made a significant commitment to technology integration and use. For the fiscal year 2000-2001, USM restructured its budget to reflect an internal

⁴ From grant application to the Pew Charitable Trust, Provost's Office, 2001.

reallocation of funds to support the President's major initiative, technology. OTR, through its Technology Infrastructure Unit, has recently completed a wireless networking project for five residence halls and is continuing the implementation of the wireless network in the remaining four residence halls; a total of 100 buildings will be on this network by the end of May, 2001. The wireless network enables the university to swiftly provide connectivity to faculty, staff, and students at one-tenth the cost of hard wiring.

Continuing Education and Distance Learning (CEDL), in partnership with OTR, leases WebCT software to deliver online course offerings. OTR supports and maintains server accessibility and provides support in issues related to scalability, maintenance, and backup. Furthermore, USM is now a *WebCT Institute*. This designation allows the University to train trainers, course developers, and administrators in the intricacies of WebCT. OTR partners with CEDL in offering WebCT training courses in its Expanding Excellence through Technology initiative, a faculty and staff development series. Currently, USM offers four hands-on training courses to faculty interested in developing online courses with WebCT. Support for faculty and for students registered in online courses also is provided by this partnership with CEDL, and through the OTR Help Desk that serves the entire university community.

Interested faculty members may use WebCT to offer online "Lecture Supplements". Each faculty member has the opportunity to incorporate online functionality (lists of readings, links to web sites, assignments, bulletin board communication, small group discussions, etc.) into a traditionally delivered course as a "lecture supplement." Faculty may also take advantage of their ability to use the "free" web space that USM allots each email account holder to develop a personal or professional web "presence."

Equipment Services, a branch of OTR, provides audio-visual equipment and computers through a short-term loan program for educational purposes. This unit also provides consultation on the design of technology-rich classrooms.

The University Libraries offer support for distance learning through a number of initiatives, including the set up and maintenance of a proxy serve to allow off-campus students to access campus databases, electronic reserves, and informative web page

complete with a Library tour, and an “Ask the Librarian” reference email page (<http://www.lib.usm.edu/fer.html>).

USM has a commitment to a learner-centered environment, as demonstrated in the University’s Strategic Plan:

“This vision projects USM as a student-centered university that promotes the timely completion of degree programs through effective instruction and advising, rigorous and relevant curricula, and an engaged and caring faculty and staff”.

In moving toward a learner-centered environment, USM is improving service to our campus-based students through flexible scheduling and enhanced learning opportunities. The new Foreign Languages Lab in the Liberal Arts Building provides access to video and audio practice materials and lesson assignments 24/7 throughout the campus. The hours for the student computer lab in Cook Library have also been extended 24/7 in response to the needs for flexible services for students.

Institutional Weakness and Significant Problems

Given the University’s commitment to the use of technology to prepare students for the 21st century, in the Fall, 2000 semester, an *ad hoc* committee of Southern Miss faculty and staff conducted a survey of 884 faculty and administrators regarding faculty’s use of technology. The survey was designed to guide administrative decisions regarding support for instructional technology use at the University, provide data to guide training and purchasing decisions with regards to instructional technology, and to garner awareness and support for the upcoming University Technology Enhancement Center.

The survey instrument gathered demographic data on department, age, academic rank, gender, and Professional Education Faculty status. Survey questions focused on faculty perceptions of the current state of technology services and support on campus; faculty attitudes towards the use of instructional technology in general and specific applications in particular; and faculty perceptions of barriers that inhibit their use of technology and of resources they need to further implement instructional technology in their teaching. Faculty responses show some variation among colleges; however, an analysis of the data revealed that, overall, faculty agree that the state of technology on the various campuses does not currently meet their needs.

The most significant barriers to faculty’s use of the technologies are identified as:

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- (1) lack of technology in the classrooms
- (2) lack of incentive programs to encourage use of instructional technology
- (3) lack of funds to purchase software
- (4) lack of on-site (classroom/lab) support
- (5) lack of necessary hardware.

Faculty are clearly using more technology than they were two years ago; 40% of them indicate that they could use more training.

Faculty identified five specific technologies needed in classrooms as priorities: (1) computer projection capability; (2) an instructor's computer station; (3) internet access; (4) network connections; and (5) student computers. Technologies faculty are most likely to use, if they could obtain support and/or service include

- email lists of students
- multimedia presentations
- the web to support research
- audio/video clips, animation, or slides
- the web for on-line materials archives
- web page with course materials

Based on the survey data analysis gathered in The Faculty Technology Survey the following recommendations have been made by the *ad hoc* committee:

- The University should address the need for incentives for faculty to invest their professional energies in learning to use technology and revising their instruction to incorporate appropriate technologies. In particular, consensus should be reached regarding instructional technology's place in the tenure and promotion expectations.
- Because this survey focused on faculty, similar surveys should be conducted to address staff, administration, and student technology concerns and issues.
- The University should focus its resources first on meeting the need for technology access at the classroom level. Considering the faculty's priorities of projection capability, instructor and student stations, and internet/network access.

- Because support for many of the technologies faculty would like to use is already available, there is a need for additional marketing, training, and technical support to increase the use of these existing technologies.

Teaching and learning today is more than explaining and listening⁵--they depend on a wide range of stimuli and experiences, many of which are provided by classroom audio-visual and multimedia equipment. At USM, the pool of this equipment is used to support an on-campus enrollment of 14,349 (Fall 1999-2000) and 653 full-time faculty members. Inadequate and outdated classroom audio-visual and multimedia equipment has created a serious weakness in the academic programs of the institution. Few classrooms have permanently installed audio-visual equipment and a large amount of equipment must be shuttled between buildings in order to meet needs. A single video-data projector may be moved between buildings and classrooms as many as six times daily in an effort to accommodate the needs of faculty in teaching classrooms.

In his recent book entitled *A University for the 21st Century*⁶, James Duderstadt notes that universities will be pressured to move away from being faculty-centered and towards being learner-centered: the movement of teaching and learning will move away from explaining and listening; the faculty is encouraged to become a coach/mentor to the learners, who will exercise more control over what, where, how, when, and with whom they learn. Duderstadt further notes that "...faculty members of the 21st century will find it necessary to set aside their roles as teachers and instead become designers of learning experiences, processes, and environments" (p. 84). Such changes often require serious reflection on the part of both the institution and the principal players on the teaching-learning team: faculty and students. The change begins with experiments, trials, or prototypes done by early adopters. It gains force through institutional commitment and the use of the techniques by the early minority.

As measured through this process, The University of Southern Mississippi is through the early adopter stage and in the early minority stage. Most classes are still group lectures. The student's typical participation is still to write down what the instructor says, review it, and then repeat it on a traditional examination. While

⁵ Many of the concepts presented in this proposal are supported by such research as "Faculty Development at SUNY: Shifting from Teaching to Learning," Dudley D. Cahn, paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (85th, Chicago, Illinois, November 4-7, 1999.)

⁶ *A University for the 21st Century*, James Duderstadt, The University of Michigan Press, 2000.

institutions such as UCLA, Maricopa Community College, and Seton Hall are transforming the educational experience by using technology to provide and explain the course content while using the faculty to challenge, model, coach, and guide, only a small number of individuals at USM are attempting such activities. While other institutions are embracing new pedagogical techniques, USM's academic programs remain more traditional in scope.⁷

Significant Problems or Threats

USM must continue its transition in preparing students for the 21st century through the use of technology. The problems presented by the need for access to technology will affect significantly the future employment of the student population at the University of Southern Mississippi and, therefore, their contributions to the state's economy. Given that only 40% of the K-12 schools in Mississippi provide access to computers in the classroom, USM's role is critical to helping young people in Mississippi understand and use modern technology as a tool for learning. The quality of entering students will decrease as students choose to attend other nearby institutions or to learn via distance education technology at other institutions of higher learning. Not taking the steps required and recommended by accrediting agencies will limit the learning modes being used and, in turn, reduce the quality of the educational experience at USM. Upon graduating, students will suffer when their lower level of preparation limits job opportunities. With 60% of USM graduates choosing to remain in the state after graduation, the economic impact is significant.

These problems are critical to the future of USM students as well as the very existence of the institution. If no action is taken to deal with these threats, the enrollment numbers at USM will decline, the equality of education will be marginalized, and USM students will be inadequately prepared to succeed the world of work in the 21st century. This lead to a downward spiral that will reduce student enrollment and then reduce quality repeatedly until the institution is no longer fiscally viable. Thus, the very existence of the institution is threatened.

⁷ USM desires cultural change along the lines of research presented in such articles as "Creating a Campus Culture to Support a Teaching and Learning Revolution," Dorothy A. Frayer, Cause-Effect, v22, n2, pp10-17, 50, 1999.

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Analysis of this problem has been extensive and diverse. In 1995, The University of Southern Mississippi prepared a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools self-study. This study followed a new format, with a strategic study titled “A commitment to Excellence: Improving Academic Quality at The University of Southern Mississippi.” The three areas for study chosen by USM were

- the physical environment of learning
- enhancing University teaching, and
- enhancing support services.

The study of the physical environment of learning pointed out that 70% of the audio-visual equipment in daily use was well past its anticipated lifetime. It also pointed out that, if the “faculty were to reshape pedagogy and curricula in productive ways to reflect new ways of teaching and learning enabled by these new technologies,” new equipment would need to be obtained. Among the recommendations arising from this part of the study were to “allocate funds for basic instructional equipment, allocate funds for audiovisual equipment.” And to provide “access to basic computer equipment and to networks.”

The study of enhancing University teaching recommended that additional awards for teaching improvement should be provided and that “the resources and mission of the Teaching Learning Resource Center (now called Instructional Media Unit and housed within the Office of Technology Resources) should be expanded” by upgrading and increasing the equipment inventory and by providing “instructional specialists to assist faculty with their needs beyond audio-visual enhancements.”

In the study of enhancing support services, students called for increased access to services through such actions as extending lab hours and increasing the number of computers in computer labs. Students also called for increasing access to information through an expanded electronic information service.

In the summer of 1995, The University of Southern Mississippi sent a planning team to the first Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable National Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. As an outcome of this event, over twenty faculty and staff attended a TLTR regional workshop in New Orleans, Louisiana in late Fall 1995. In February 1996, a one-day retreat was held at the USM Gulf Park campus to bring together the people

who had participated in the various TLTR activities and plan for the future organization of a TLTR at USM. After the retreat, a position paper was prepared requesting that the TLTR be formalized and that a number of other steps be taken:

- (1) One request was for an integration of technology into the core courses, in order to meet the SACS accreditation requirements of computer skills.
- (2) Another request was for support of faculty development—“Just buying equipment means nothing if faculty members are not conversant and comfortable in its use.
- (3) A summer camp was called for where faculty could be brought up to speed on current technology.
- (4) A request was for “state-of-the-art workrooms with sufficient support staff to meet the escalating needs for faculty assistance.” The position paper ends with a statement that “either our university must address head-on the advent of new technologies in academic or fall hopelessly into the pass.”

The university has taken steps to provide faculty with technology-related opportunities. For example, the first Techno Gras was held in 1996. Held on Mardi Gras Day, a regional holiday and one on which classes are cancelled for students. Techno Gras was a one-day conference where faculty gave presentations to other faculty about how they were using technology in their classes. This festival was repeated in 1997 and 1998, with modifications made based on feedback from the participants. Each year, faculty and staff requested more hands-on training sessions in order to learn how to use the technology. As a result of the demand for hand-on training, the Expanding Excellence through Technology Initiative was formed through the TLTR to offer hands-on training in computer applications for all faculty and staff free of charge. These classes are schedule both during the day and evening hours and at multiple times during each semester, dependent on demand (<http://www.ee.usm.edu>)

A major planning effort which involved students, staff, and faculty, alumni, and key leaders in business and the community began a monumental study in September 1997 with the purpose of presenting a vision of where The University was at the time and how it should develop in the future. The commission on the Future of the University prepared

the foundation for a strategic plan that was completed in March 1999; the Commission's views and recommendations were presented in the areas as follows⁸:

- The University of Southern Mississippi will be known for outstanding teaching at all levels that encourages high aspirations and high levels of achievement and creates, in its students, an excitement about learning that lasts a lifetime.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will attain growing distinction through the scholarly and creative achievements of its faculty and students in an environment outstanding for supporting research and creative efforts.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will commit itself to supporting scholarships that integrates theory and practice and becoming a national role model in the integration of collegiate research, teaching, public service programs, and community partnerships.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will serve the educational needs of a diverse group of talented, highly motivated students from all parts of Mississippi, the nation, and abroad who are eager to learn and well prepared to take full advantage of the university experience.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will be known for its nationally and internationally prominent faculty that excels in research, teaching, and service, as well as its talented and experienced staff that provides outstanding support for academic programs and student development.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will promote a sense of community and provide a collegiate experience rich in tradition, academics, activity, and experiences that will inspire enduring loyalty.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will expand and enhance its programs to serve distinctive higher education needs of the Mississippi Gulf Coast through the USM Gulf Coast, the Institute of Marine Sciences, the Stennis Space Center, and USM's centers in Jackson County and at Keesler Air Force Base.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will grow and add new facilities through a well-planned process dedicated to pre-serving and enhancing the campus ambience while providing the functional, technologically sophisticated facilities required to fulfill its mission.
- The University of Southern Mississippi will have comprehensive public and private financial support programs and modern financial management resources necessary to achieve its goals.

⁸ From Report of the Commission on the Future of the University, April 14, 1998, The University of Southern Mississippi.

The University of Southern Mississippi has just completed phase two and is commencing phase three (actual implementation) of a multi-phase strategic planning process which was recommended in the Commission on the Future of the University's report. The phase-two document produced in March, 1999, "A National University for the Gulf South" outlines the guiding principles on which the University will focus in the coming years. Regarding the use of instructional technology the plan states, "**The use of instructional and distance technologies should become a prominent feature of the USM learning environment.**" It also states that we should "**provide for professional development in the use of new technologies**", thus setting the stage for the Office of Technology Resources strategic plan and the basis for this grant⁹.

Through the variety of ways listed above, the threats to the academic programs have been identified and analyzed. The analyses have occurred over a number of years and have been undertaken by a wide variety of groups. If there is one constant across all the analyses, it is the conclusion by faculty and administration that more technological applications are needed in order to address threats to The University of Southern Mississippi's academic programs.

Analysis of Current Actions

Since the completion of the SACS institutional self-study and the incorporation of the then-Teaching Learning Resource Center in to the Office of Technology Resources as the Instructional Media Unit, and additional staff member has been hired in Equipment Services to assist faculty with classroom instructional equipment, the equipment inventory has been upgraded and expanded to keep up with advancing technologies, and some new services have been added, such as the laptop lending program that provides, on a check-out basis, a laptop for faculty use.

Positive actions have taken to remedy the problems of inadequate access to computing facilities and equipment and access to the campus network, but, again, the advance of technology has been faster that the University's ability to meet it; priorities had to be established, and OTR determined that the campus infrastructure had to be in place before we could shift our focus to the instructional element. The campus

⁹ USM has reviewed the model program at the University of Texas at Austin. See: "Establishing a Center for Instructional Technologies," George H. Culp, *Syllabus*, v12 n10, p34-6, June 1999.

infrastructure is within a year of completion, although the maintenance, upkeep, and new development will be ongoing. The vast majority of faculty has adequate computing resources available. Faculty members who once did not have telephone in their offices now have the equipment they need to be productive knowledge workers, and a minimal training program is in place to assist them in learning to utilize these tools.

In order to begin the process of making sure our students are graduating with 21st century technology skills, the Expanding Excellence workshops were opened to Graduate Students during Summer 2000. Graduate students can now partake of offerings that teach the Microsoft Office Suite, use of E-mail, basic Microsoft Windows setup, WebCT online course delivery and similar other courses.

In order to meet the increasing needs of faculty to provide online course offerings, the University has provided hardware, software, and personnel support for the WebCT enterprise; approximately 100 full courses are now online and there are a number of courses that use specific modules of the software to enhance electronic learning. Because of the success of this effort, the University has now been selected as a WebCT Institute and hosts training and seminars for other institution in the use of WebCT.

In order to respond to student needs for access to computer labs, the lab in Cook Library has recently extended its hours to a 24/7 schedule, and a number of the labs have been upgraded with new equipment. A recent training program for lab facilitators has been instituted, which will let these student employees be of more assistance to the general student body in terms of their online courses and our new web-enabled registration, set to kick off in March 2001 for fall registration.

Institutional Management

Strengths

After more that 20 years as President of The University of Southern Mississippi, Dr. Aubrey Lucas announced his retirement in 1997, and Dr. Horace Fleming was hired to replace him. Under Dr. Fleming's direction, the administrative structure of The University of Southern Mississippi has again begun an extensive program to strengthen its parts of the institution. For example, four new positions have been created that report directly to the President: the Vice President of Institutional Advancement, The Provost (replacing and enhancing the position of VP of Academic Affairs), the Chief Technology

Officer, and the Vice President of USM Gulf Coast, a position needed to place an appropriate amount of emphasis on a constituent area which has the fastest growing population base in the state.

The University has been undergoing implementation of a new administrative software system, PeopleSoft, since 1998. This software will permit staff involved with financial and accounting procedures to have electronic access to important data in a more timely manner.

Weaknesses

We find few Institutional Management weaknesses, as campus management is scrutinized by the Vice President for Business and Finance and the University Auditor, as well as the College Board. Specific weaknesses may include budgetary problems at the state level, which reduce funding coming directly to the University from the state legislature and the difficulties that arise from this situation in retaining people in higher level administrative positions. Another weakness, created by the use of antiquated software system, is currently being addressed by the installation of PeopleSoft modules.

Significant Problem

No Title III funding is being sought to address this weakness because steps are currently being taken to deal with it.

Fiscal Stability

Strengths

Strategies applied towards institutional fiscal stability include securing of financial resources from student fees, state appropriations, private gifts and contracts, sales and services of educational activities, other sources, and sales and services of auxiliary enterprises, including athletics and the provision of adequate facilities to support the mission of The University of Southern Mississippi has decreasing revenue streams from state funding but increasing awards from research and other sponsored programs. For fiscal year 1999-2000, revised current funds revenues (unrestricted) totaled \$160,016,366. Research funding increased in 1999-2000 from \$20,612,472 to \$30,168,477.¹⁰ According to current state forecasts, the Institutions for Higher Learning are expecting a 10% budget reduction for the coming fiscal year, 2001-2002. The

¹⁰ *The University of Southern Mississippi Fact Book of 1999-2000.*

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University's distribution of educational and general budget is comparable with other Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Primary functions of business and finance offices, administered through the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance, are to collect monies due The University, pay all properly approved expenditures, provide accounting reports to all departments, coordinate all independent audits of university financial operation, operate the Human Resources office, and maintain The University's physical plant. Other offices related to university financial support include Financial Aid, Development, Alumni Affairs, and Research and Sponsored Programs.

The Development Office, operating under the Vice President for Advancement, coordinates The University of Southern Mississippi Foundation, which is the designated fund-raising agency for the institution. This office is designed to create an awareness of the financial needs of the University which are not provided by state or federal support and to systematically implement plans to meet these financial needs. The Development Office directs all private fund-raising with the exception of Eagle Club for athletics and Alumni Association dues. A variety of methods such as Annual Fund program, personal visits, direct mail, and phone-a-thons are used to solicit gifts. Programs are in place to encourage major gifts and deferred giving, and recognition clubs recognize individuals who make major commitments of \$10,000 or more. The Development Office also works with the various schools and colleges to develop ways of increasing private support for their units.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, operating under the Vice President for Research, assists faculty and staff with proposal development and submission to state and federal agencies and to private foundations. During fiscal year 1998-1999, \$20,612,472 in external funding was awarded to The University through 293 proposals for research, instruction, public service, and other projects; this number increased in 1999-2000 to 367 winning proposals, netting the University \$30,168,477, and increase of 68%. In FY 2000, external funding reached \$40,130,656, a 30% increase over the previous year. Funding sources included the federal government (77.5%), the state (13.6%), business and industry (4.7%), foundations (2.7%), and other sources

(1.5%). Funded projects included those in Research (195), Instruction (70), Student Aid (6), Public Service (75), and Other (26).

Weaknesses

While state funding continues to increase, the increases are not based upon the formula previously used to fund higher education in Mississippi. Thus, the recent enrollment increases at USM have yielded only a portion of the funding increases that would have been provided had the formulated costs been provided.

The recent Ayers case, in which the State of Mississippi was found to have a segregated higher educational system, has both influenced the hesitancy to continue the funding formulas and required the state to set aside money for special purposes to attack that problem. In both cases, funding that would have gone to USM has not been available.

Significant Problem

With little expectation of additional state funding, USM is focusing on acquiring more external funding from gifts and donations. Improving the University's performance in this area is crucial to its continued growth and success. The capital campaign, scheduled to launch during Spring 2001 is expected to help significantly in this area.

Analysis of Current Actions

A number of steps are underway to achieve success in acquiring additional external funding from gifts and donations. Under the new President, a new cabinet level position has been created to head up this effort. The Foundation and Alumni Affairs offices have been brought together to work on this problem as a team under the new Vice President of Institutional Advancement. A new computerized information system is being acquired to improve the quality of information available to fund raisers. A major capital campaign is planned to kickoff in spring, 2001. With these steps under way, USM feels that this problem is under control and, therefore, is not seeking funds from this Title III grant to assist in its efforts.

Institutional Weaknesses and Significant Problems

A number of planning processes have been undertaken to identify areas for improvements. The Commission on the Future recommended that the University focus efforts on extending computer networks and advanced technological capacity to all

buildings and to make a substantial investment in database technology to modernize information resources; these two recommendations are close to being addressed with the installation of the new campus network and with the installation of the PeopleSoft enterprise software; with these two important projects almost in place the University is now poised to focus on the other technology related areas.

As a follow up to prior planning processes, the Faculty Technology Survey was completed in March 2001 to identify faculty and instructional requirements. The needs fall into two broad categories:

- (1) need for additional instructional technologies and support; and
- (2) faculty professional development to further enhance incorporation of technology into the curricula.

Results of the Faculty Technology Survey, reflective of both the Strategic Plan recommendations and the 1995 SACS self-study, indicate the educational technology areas of concern facing the institution. The information below illustrates the major findings:

Instructional Technologies Needs:

- Need classroom technologies – 83%
- Need computer projection in classroom – 67%
- Need instructor computer in classroom – 67%
- Need Classroom/Lab support – 63%
- Need Internet access in classroom – 60%
- Need network connections in classroom – 58%
- Need student computers in classroom – 58%
- Need upgraded hardware – 57%
- Need electronic pointers in classroom – 43%
- Need multimedia classroom – 42%
- Need classroom physical environment changes – 37%
- Need microphones in classroom – 35%

Faculty Development Needs:

Faculty want to use if support were available:

- E-mail – 81%
- Multimedia presentation – 77%
- Web pages – 77%
- Audio/video clips/animation or slides – 76%
- Web to collaborate at USM – 66%
- Web to collaborate worldwide – 65%
- Bulletin boards – 62%
- Computer simulations – 62%
- Web to present work to world colleagues – 61%

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- Self-paced tutorials – 59%
- Web to present work to colleagues – 55%
- Self-paced practice lessons/tests – 53%
- Web for online quizzes – 51%
- Web for course delivery – 50%
- Web for computer simulations – 47%
- Streaming video – 47%
- Incorporate technology into the curricula – 41%
- Use copyrighted materials for instruction – 17%

General Barriers to Technology Use:

- No incentives – 72%
- No departmental funds – 65%
- Have barriers to use tech – 64%
- Too expensive – 43%
- Need technical support to incorporate technology – 43%
- Too much trouble – 30%

Analysis Process

The Faculty Technology Survey was conducted in August, 2000, as a result of the recommendations of the strategic planning process. The strategic planning process involved representatives from the faculty, staff, students, alumni, administrators; each college was represented, as well as both graduate and undergraduate student bodies. The technology survey was submitted to all full-time faculty and administrators on all campuses. A representative sample was returned. Recommendations from the Faculty Technology Survey follow:

- The University should address the need for incentives for faculty to invest their professional energies in learning to use technology and revising their instruction to incorporate appropriate technologies. In particular, consensus should be reached regarding instructional technology's place in the tenure and promotion expectations.
- Because support for many of the technologies faculty would like to use is already available, there is a need for additional marketing, training, and technical support to increase the use of these existing technologies.
- The University should focus its resources first on meeting the need for technology access at the classroom level, considering the faculty's priorities of projection capability, instructor and student stations, and internet/network access.

- Because this survey focused on faculty, similar surveys should be conducted to address staff, administration, and student technology concerns and issues.

B. KEY, OVERALL GOALS OF THE INSTITUTION¹¹

These goals related to instructional technology have been selected from the recommendations in the Strategic Plan as indicative of the direction the university is taking in the near future:

- Goal #1: The University should continue on the path of developing multi-media and distance learning classrooms at all of its sites.
- Goal #2: On a selective basis, the institution should use incentives that encourage program development utilizing new technologies for learning.
- Goal #3: The use of new technologies and distance education should eventually be sustained as part of the on-going responsibilities and regular load of faculty.
- Goal #4: Foster the uses of technology instruction.
- Goal #5: Reevaluate the scheduling of courses and services for changing student populations with particular attention to...the use of technology to access information and more courses through distance learning and the internet.
- Goal #6: Provide opportunities for faculty professional development, particularly in the use of new technologies for teaching, learning and scholarship.
- Goal #7: Use distance technologies more extensively in the delivery of USM educational programs to various USM locations.
- Goal #8: Encourage more use of university expertise to provide professional development programming; these service activities should be given appropriate weight in annual evaluations.

C. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR THE INSTITUTION – LIST OBJECTIVES

Activity 1: Purchase of Equipment to Improve Academic Programs

- Objective 1: By 2002, assess the state of readiness of existing classrooms used for “highly visible undergraduate programs” for the incorporation of educational technology related to instruction.

¹¹ Selected from the *Strategic Plan* March 13, 1999, The University of Southern Mississippi.

The University of Southern Mississippi

Objective 2: During 2002-2006, between 75% to 100% of the classrooms used for “highly visible undergraduate programs” will be adapted for multi-media instruction.

Objective 3: By 2006, a minimum of 60% of USM faculty will report being “satisfied” to “very satisfied” with available classroom technologies.

Activity 2: Faculty Professional Development

Objective 1: By 2006, 50% of the faculty will report adequate skill levels in basic technology applications and instructional equipment operations, including word processing, spreadsheets, electronic communications, electronic presentation methodologies, and other applications relevant to educational technology.

Objective 2: In each project year, present emerging instructional technologies on an on-going basis throughout the project year to all faculty.

Objective 3: By 2006, the number of fully or partially online courses will increase from 100 to 300.

Objective 4: Between 2003 and 2006, the number of online degree programs offered by The University of Southern Mississippi will increase to 6.

Objective 5: By 2003, 50% of USM faculty will report using e-mail, e-mail lists and/or listservs to enhance teaching and learning activities.

Objective 6: by 2004, 45% of USM faculty will report using web pages for instructional purposes.

Objective 7: By 2006, 50% of USM faculty will report using multimedia presentation methods, including audio and/or video clips, slide production, and/or animation to augment curricula.

Objective 8: By 2006, there will be 4 faculty members from each college (with the exception of the Honors College and the College of Continuing, International, and Distance Education) who are able to serve as mentors and provide training and guidance to their colleagues related to educational technology.

D. INSTITUTIONALIZING PRACTICES AND IMPROVEMENTS

For any program to be institutionalized to become part of the university’s normal offering there must be philosophical commitment to the goals of the program. The University of Southern Mississippi’s Strategic Plan demonstrates this commitment through the goals

described above in section B, page 6. Furthermore, the university is willing to commit its financial resources to support the Title III program and maintain this initiative when Title III terminates. Specifically, the University will:

- Assume responsibility for an increasing percentage of funding for positions initiated by the Title III funding in years 2-5.
- Establish a Technology Enhancement Center to sustain the training and development efforts included in this proposal.
- Maintain and enhance access to instructional technologies made possible through Title III funding.
- Sustain the quality of equipment through a refurbishment program.
- Continue to pursue and implement emerging technologies for instructional use.
- Revise the tenure and promotion policies to include incentives and rewards for the full integration of technology applications to enhance an updated learning environment.
- Promote collegiality and mentoring related to technology between and among faculty.

PART II: DEVELOPMENT GRANT SPECIFICS

A. DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR TITLE III SUPPORT

Although the University has not received Title III funding since 1996, previous awards were received in 1991-1994.

B. RANKING ACTIVITIES

The activities chosen for this proposed project are interrelated. It is necessary to have adequate instructional technology as well as faculty who are trained to use this technology in order to be effective. These activities directly related to the goals of the institution as described in the Strategic Plan. The focus of this will be on:

Activity 1 (Priority 1) – Purchase of Equipment to improve academic programs.

Activity 2 (Priority 2) – Creating faculty development programs to enhance the use of instructional technology.