GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Technology Plan

2023-2029

Draft

9.15.2023

Reviewed annually, this six-year plan provides direction and guidance to the future of technology at the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.

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INTRODUCTION

The worldwide pandemic that began in early 2020 and ended in May 2023 has highlighted the need for modernization and standardization within the District's technology ecosystem. There has been a significant increase in reliance on technology for business operations, collaboration and learning, bringing attention to key technologies that need immediate attention to sustain our mission and capture efficiencies. Commitment to investing in new and existing technologies led us to pivot to remote learning and working. As GCCCD realigns resources for the future, we must continue to invest in strategic technology opportunities to remain relevant and competitive. The time is now for digital transformation at GCCCD.

As stewards of District resources, we have developed the following document to outline guiding principles and goals for the next six years. These guiding principles and goals will move us in the direction of increased Information security, strengthened teaching and learning, enhanced student experiences, and improved administrative efficiencies. This document was developed with input from faculty, staff, administrators and students who are committed to seeing GCCCD fulfill its vision and mission:

> **Vision:** Transforming lives through high-quality educational programs and services that meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

> **Mission:** The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District provides high-quality, equitable learning opportunities to eastern San Diego County and beyond. We prepare students to meet changing community and workforce needs, while advancing social justice and economic mobility.

Our efforts in creating this plan began with a district-wide planning summit. Over 70 participants, from Grossmont College, Cuyamaca College and District Services came together for a one-day retreat in September 2022 to review existing plans and goals, share relevant data and develop broad, shared goals that could guide the individual planning efforts at all three sites. In addition, participants developed a shared set of Guiding Principles intended to ensure that individual decision-making and future collaborations would be guided by a shared set of agreed upon principles. Input from the members of the Technology Planning & Policy Council was gathered and this plan was then presented to the District Executive Council and eventually the Governing Board for approval.

The District will use the guiding principles outlined in this plan to support sound recommendation and decision making around technology issues.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES / CORE VALUES

These guiding principles / core values serve as tools for establishing technology priorities, implementing goals and measuring success. They are intended to help ensure that recommendations are based on agreed upon values. All technology decision makers will seek solutions that are:

Accessible
All students and staff should have access to the hardware and software that they need for academic success. All technology experiences should adhere to the highest accessibility standards, based on universal design principles, to ensure a rich experience for all users.

Equitable
Experiences and needs vary, and technology should be flexible enough to meet a variety of needs and experiences.

Secure
Even as access and ease of use remain priorities, the duty to maintain user information security and privacy, both internally and externally, remains central to decision-making.

Student Focused
Primary emphasis should be on what will best serve students as they pursue their educational goals. This extends to decisions regarding what technologies we purchase and implement, as well as to how, when, and to what extent we implement them.

Sustainable
To be sustainable, technologies must be simple, streamlined and aligned. Training and support needs and cost-of-ownership must be factored in, along with ease-of-use and environmental impacts. While needs may vary across sites within the district, attempts to align purchasing and implementation of technology are expected and will be considered in prioritization processes –

as they contribute to both sustainability and to ease-of-use for students who access technology at multiple sites.

Transparent

Technology planning, prioritization, implementation, and evaluation should be based on open and clear communication with all stakeholders, involve input from constituent groups, and include follow-up information to "close the loop" with everyone involved.

GOALS

1. **Implement and maintain high-quality technology infrastructure** to create the foundational conditions required to expand our capacity to support increased student access, engagement, retention, success, and completion.
    a) Modernize and improve existing infrastructure to improve usability, efficiency, and information security.
    b) Invest in infrastructure for anticipated growth in needs.
    c) Build in flexibility for emerging and future technologies that can expand the institutional capacity of technology.

2. **Expand operational excellence** by implementing robust Information Technology (IT) governance and operational processes across the District that guide stakeholders in recommendation making, help determine how those recommendations are accomplished and increase institutional capacity to respond to and communicate needs and decisions.

    a) Develop policies and procedures that govern the use of technology, designed to support the organization's operational excellence goals, while also mitigating risks and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

    b) Develop and maintain clear and transparent processes for prioritizing, allocating, maintaining, replacing and tracking technologies in the District.

    c) Collaborate with the colleges to align and maximize the allocation of resources as related to our stated core values.

    d) Apply technology to maximize efficiency of operations

3. **Enhance learning experiences through the use of technology**
    a) Partner with the colleges to provide, support and train users with conventional and assistive hardware and software designed to promote high-quality, equity-producing learning environments.

    b) Partner with the Educational Support Services Department in the implementation of policies and procedures. This may involve training employees on new technologies and procedures, as well as making changes to existing systems and processes.

4. **Eliminate digital divides**
   a) Partner with the colleges to provide students, faculty, staff and administrators access to appropriate technologies, and support in mastering the use of those technologies to help fulfill the mission of the District.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

The context for the delivery of technology services within the District is shaped by both the current and rapidly evolving significant drivers in the world around us. The pandemic was just one example of an external factor that required us to change the way we use and implement technology.

Cloud computing services and the need for SaaS (Software as a Service) are becoming more prevalent in higher education systems, requiring that we rethink how we manage and deliver IT services. In addition, data for decision making is expected to be a "push of a button" away and placed into the hands of those who need it to make recommendations and decisions.

GCCCD is committed to providing all students with an equitable and excellent education, regardless of their background, experiences, or level of technology access. As we implement new, more efficient business models, we must uphold the fundamental tenets of learning while also ensuring that all students have the flexibility and support they need to succeed. This includes addressing the digital divide and providing all students with access to the technologies and skills they need to thrive in the 21st century.

GCCCD is facing growing and ever-changing regulatory requirements, as well as continual financial pressure. This means that everyone within the college must work together to solve problems and make decisions collaboratively and strategically. This is essential for ensuring that resources are focused appropriately, and that technology is used to support the college's mission and values. Academic decisions, program changes, and new opportunities all have a systemic impact on technology and can impact the underlying data structure of the college's systems. Offering online courses or implementing new platforms requires careful attention to information security and infrastructure. By carefully considering the systemic impacts of technology when making decisions, GCCCD can ensure that it is using technology in a way that is efficient, effective, and secure.

RESPONDING TO DRIVERS OF CHANGE

These drivers impact the demand for technology services and the way they are managed. The overarching goal is to support the mission of the District by providing an excellent technology user experience while managing our budget in a fiscally responsible way. To do this, we need to develop and maintain an infrastructure that is secure, reliable, resilient, flexible, scalable, and

innovative where strategically advantageous, along with sound business processes in functional areas. We also need a strong IT Governance model that works within the GCCCD culture, guides stakeholders in recommendation making and determines how goals and objectives are accomplished. Through IT governance, relationship building and well-structured IT organization, we can work collaboratively to achieve our goals while stewarding our limited resources.

IT Governance

In the 2022-2023 Academic year, a new IT Governance model was implemented to help improve our recommendation-making processes and operational work. We created the [Technology Planning & Policy Council (TPPC)](#) to provide vision, strategy, policy and planning recommendations for the adoption, implementation and maintenance of technologies with an equity-minded focus. We also created the [Technology Operations Group (TOG)](#) to make recommendations on operational priorities and system enhancements for administrative and instructional technology. TOG collaboratively created and implemented a new process for more efficiently and effectively identifying, prioritizing and advancing priorities and responding to all the needs. Through this process, work has been categorized into the following areas:

1. **Compliance/Legislative:** Work we are required to do by law or for compliance reasons. Examples are a new MIS requirement from the State Chancellor's office or a new requirement for Federal Financial Aid.
2. **Business Continuity:** Work we need to do to continue existing services. An example is the vendor who prints our diplomas goes out of business and we need to find a new vendor to provide this service.
3. **System Stability:** Work we need to do to keep our systems healthy. Examples are production fixes or patches to existing critical systems.
4. **Improving Business Operations:** Work we need to do to streamline operations. An example is the Implementation of the Self-Service Faculty Rosters.
5. **New System Implementations:** Adopting a new system for a core service or business function. Examples are moving our Financial Aid system from a 3rd party application into our Student Information System, moving to a new library system or a learning management system, and adopting a new documentation management system or appointment system.
6. **Dependencies: Work that must be done to support another identified priority.** An example would be that to implement Colleague Financial Aid, we needed to modify the program that calculates Academic Standing.

TOG uses a rubric to make recommendations to the Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC) of Technology on the prioritization of the various projects and requests. The AVC of Technology works closely with the Associate Vice Chancellor of Educational Support Services to refine these recommendations and present them to TPPC and the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Evaluation of this new IT Governance model and process for prioritization will be on-going and transparent in the spirit of continuous improvement.

IT Organizational Structure

District IT is fully committed to supporting the colleges and District in meeting its strategic and operational objectives through leadership and support of appropriate information technology solutions and services. This will be accomplished by:

- **Aligning and stewarding resources** to effectively support college and District priorities and objectives;
- Investing in the **development of close, transparent, and collaborative relationships** with the colleges and their faculty, students, staff, and other community members to partner in best serving the District's existing and future needs;
- **Encouraging** and supporting **innovation** in solutions;
- **Developing our human resources** to ensure we are reflecting diversity and leading in understanding, deploying, and supporting current and future solutions to support the District's mission;

One area of focus that must come at the beginning is to develop sustainable funding processes to replace technology as it ages. In addition, we must have a robust process in place to help us determine whether we should implement new technology. Deployed technologies should be reliable and not require extensive professional troubleshooting to be operational. Solutions on platforms we already use/own should be sought out to reduce or eliminate redundancies. Whenever possible an already available commercial solution should be implemented rather than build a system in-house.

As we change our technologies, the skill sets of our employees, and our processes for interacting, we will need to maintain a team spirit across all divisions to solve the very difficult and expensive technology challenges we are facing. The load of day-to-day responsibilities to keep the organization running competes with the time and resources required to be transformational. We need to invest in strategic external partnerships to acquire the skills we need to advance projects quickly.

CONCLUSION

Many factors will contribute to the District's ability to successfully address the ongoing technology needs of the organization and all students, faculty, staff and administrators. The goals outlined in this document are ambitious. It will take the combined efforts of all District and college stakeholders to accomplish our goals while following the Guiding Principles outlined.