OIT STRATEGIC PLAN

Office of Information Technology

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LETTER FROM THE OIT LEADERSHIP TEAM

In 2019, our team had the vision that The Office of Information Technology at The University of Alabama would become a collaborative community of IT professionals that serves UA students, faculty and staff with innovative and reliable technology resources.

Since the release of that plan, digital transformation at UA has accelerated at a pace that no one expected. Our vision quickly became a reality and also a necessity for the University. Over the past two years, our team adapted, stepped up and worked together to develop innovative and reliable technology services in a time when our community depended on technology more than they ever had before.

Moving forward, we will continue in our mission to advance research, teaching, learning and operations at UA by providing exceptional technology services and support. This 2022-2025 strategic plan focuses on leveraging existing technology resources while transitioning to next-generation services which include cloud services, instructional technologies, collaboration tools, cybersecurity and research computing. Another key focus in this plan is the development and cultivation of relationships with the UA community and also within our organization. We will continue to focus on initiatives to recruit and retain our greatest asset, our team members.

Thank you for trusting us as your partner in technology. We look forward to the next three years and supporting each of you at The University of Alabama.

Roll Tide!

Vision + Mission

VISION

OIT will be a collaborative community of IT professionals that serves UA students, faculty and staff with innovative and reliable technology resources.

MISSION

It is our mission to advance research, teaching, learning and operations at UA by providing exceptional technology services and support to students, faculty and staff.

OUR VALUES

OUR VALUES

RELIABLE

We are the trusted provider of IT services for the campus community.

RESPECT

We foster an open and honest environment, respecting the knowledge and expertise of others.

RESPONSIVE

We quickly adapt and take action to support our customers.

INNOVATE

We empower our employees to creative innovative solutions.

COLLABORATIVE

We promote cross-team collaboration within our organization and with the UA community.

IMPROVE

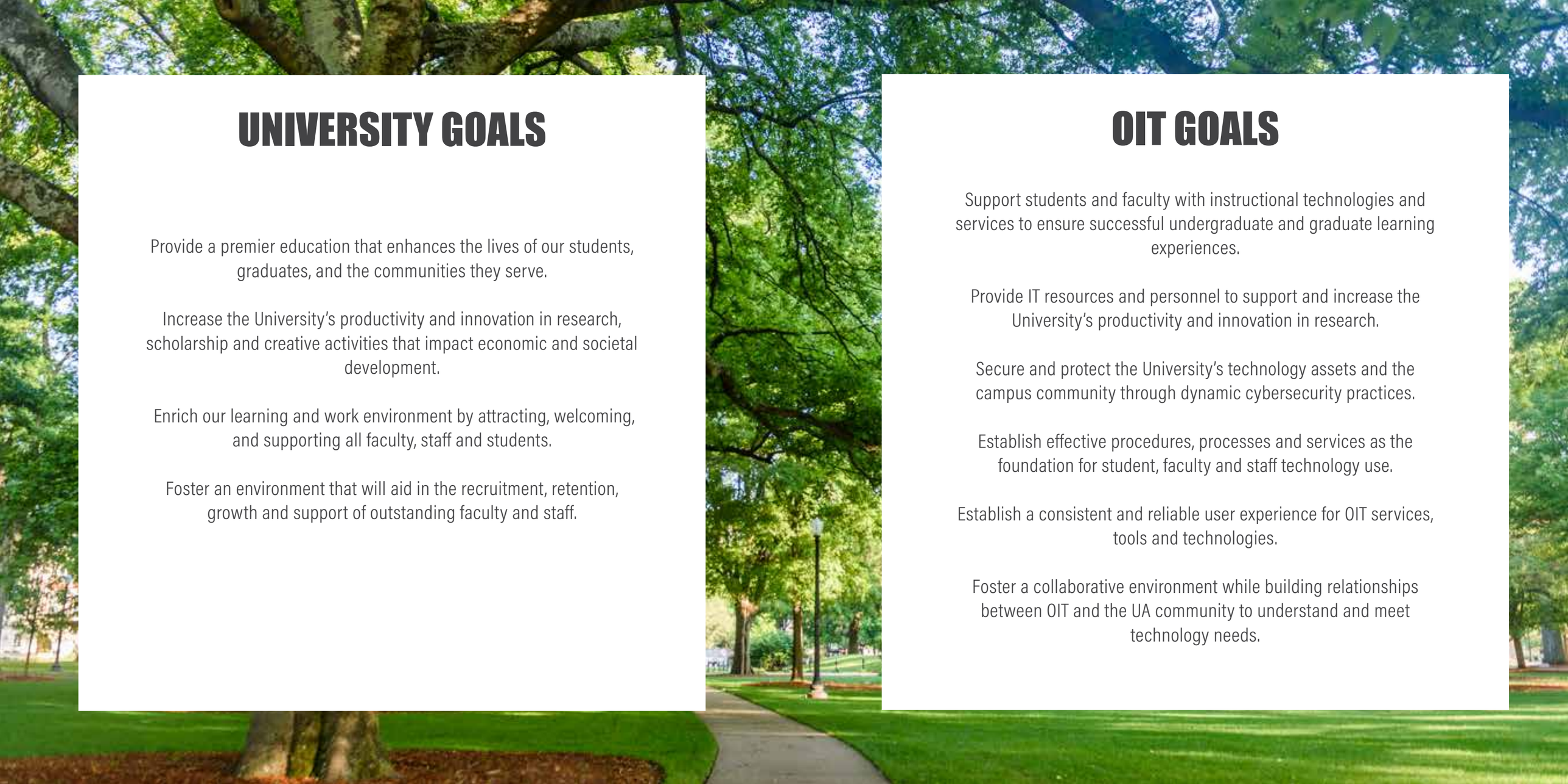
We foster an environment of continuous improvement, and we embrace new ideas.

CHANGE

We embrace and drive change that benefits our customers.

POSITIVE

We cultivate a positive, solutions-driven culture.



UNIVERSITY GOALS

Provide a premier education that enhances the lives of our students, graduates, and the communities they serve.

Increase the University's productivity and innovation in research, scholarship and creative activities that impact economic and societal development.

Enrich our learning and work environment by attracting, welcoming, and supporting all faculty, staff and students.

Foster an environment that will aid in the recruitment, retention, growth and support of outstanding faculty and staff.

OIT GOALS

Support students and faculty with instructional technologies and services to ensure successful undergraduate and graduate learning experiences.

Provide IT resources and personnel to support and increase the University's productivity and innovation in research.

Secure and protect the University's technology assets and the campus community through dynamic cybersecurity practices.

Establish effective procedures, processes and services as the foundation for student, faculty and staff technology use.

Establish a consistent and reliable user experience for OIT services, tools and technologies.

Foster a collaborative environment while building relationships between OIT and the UA community to understand and meet technology needs.

TEACHING + LEARNING

Support students and faculty with instructional technologies and services to ensure successful undergraduate and graduate learning experiences.

GOAL 1

Create a consistent, reliable and accessible instructional technology experience for instructors and students.

- Pursue opportunities to accelerate classroom technology upgrades.
- Upgrade twenty classrooms per year utilizing existing funding allocation.
- Monitor patterns in support requests to identify long term solutions.
- Develop and implement accessible LMS course templates.
- Design innovative solutions for instructional needs, using existing resources, and explore cutting edge technology while maintaining user interface standards.
- Modify and implement a preventive maintenance strategy for classroom technology.

GOAL 2

Cultivate and support instructional technology readiness in UA stakeholders to meet academic needs through education and outreach.

- Develop both detailed tutorials and quick resource guides to support successful classroom and instructional technology use.
- Create and promote user-focused technology readiness instruction for teaching and learning needs including accessibility, digital literacy and problem-solving tactics for technology use.
- Maintain collaborative and open communications channels with campus stakeholders to ascertain and meet instructional technology needs.

GOAL 3

Evaluate effectiveness of instructional technology tools and services to drive decisions for teaching and learning.

- Provide opportunities for users to share feedback via focus groups, committees and surveys.
- Demonstrate use of feedback and other information in decision making and improved services.
- Provide meaningful data to administration and campus stakeholders to support initiatives and planning.

RESEARCH

Provide IT resources and personnel to support and increase the University's productivity and innovation in research.

GOAL 1

Grow UA's advanced cyberinfrastructure to support an increase in research productivity and impact.

- Complete the refit of UA's SciNet high-speed, high-bandwidth science network.
- Equip UA researchers with necessary resources by completing the buildout of a cloud-based research self-service environment.
- Expand services at UA's co-location facility to accommodate HPC cluster growth.
- Support GIS research projects in the new ESRI ArcGIS cluster.
- Grow available research storage by 2PB/year.
- Establish a long-term sustainable funding model for research computing.

GOAL 2

Enable UA students, faculty and staff to incorporate research compute capabilities into their research, pedagogy and creative activities.

- Host eight annual training and education events for the UA research community.
- Expand partnership with UA Libraries on ESRI ArcGIS processes, procedures and adoption strategies.
- Establish a research computing website with supporting and helpful information.

GOAL 3

Partner with key stakeholders and pursue opportunities that grow UA's research computing profile.

- Support Alabama Advanced Research Computing Consortium (AARCC).
- Support UA Research Institutes (AWI, etc.) compute development and implementation.
- Support the SEC Memorandum of Understanding on AI Pedagogy.
- Continue regular campus research leadership meetings to create clear channels for communication and collaboration.

SECURITY + RISK

Secure and protect the University's technology assets and the campus community through dynamic cybersecurity practices.

GOAL 1

Integrate students into OIT security processes.

- Develop a student-run Security Operations Center (SOC) and provide student cybersecurity internships and employment opportunities.
- Build relationships with colleges and IT-focused student groups to inform them of opportunities.

GOAL 2

Maintain a strong culture of cybersecurity across the UA community.

- Work with UA partners to refine online cybersecurity awareness training for faculty and staff through the University's HR learning management system.
- Implement phishing simulations and targeted training for faculty and staff.
- Provide cybersecurity awareness training for faculty and staff in departmental and divisional meetings, and for students in classroom presentations.
- Continue security outreach to the community by presenting to external organizations.

GOAL 3

Maintain compliance with state, federal and business regulations.

- Remain accountable to requirements and policies while ensuring preparation for quick reactions to new regulations.
- Implement mobile device management as required by regulation or risk mitigation.
- Improve compliance tracking with regulations; establish and regularly monitor controls.
- Support UA's Compliance, Ethics and Regulatory Affairs department in the implementation of privacy, security and third-party risk programs.
- Refine UA cybersecurity policies.

GOAL 4

Reduce operational risk.

- Improve threat management by constantly evaluating threat intelligence.
- Implement data loss prevention capabilities, monitoring for transmission of sensitive data and removing or encrypting it where possible.
- Regularly test for security weaknesses through internal processes and external resources.
- Monitor and enhance data governance processes by working closely with UA data stewards to determine best practices.

GOAL 5

Implement innovative security technologies and end-user security tools.

- Implement additional security automation tools to decrease response time to threats.
- Implement modern endpoint detection and threat response tools.
- Refine cloud security practices to better protect the UA community.
- Implement modern business continuity and disaster recovery infrastructure.
- Pursue password-less authentication options.
- Establish processes and implement tools to better secure UA's remote workforce.

GOAL 6

Improve incident response procedures and processes.

- Evaluate and refine incident response plans and procedures through table-top exercises.
- Utilize incident and breach management tools to aid in more effective documentation and notification.

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE

Establish effective procedures, processes and services as the foundation for University student, faculty and staff technology use.

GOAL 1

Provide reliable, scalable on-premises and cloud-based application and data hosting services.

- Evaluate appropriate hosting environments for development, test and production applications, databases and services.
- Investigate multi-cloud offerings to provide solutions that match a customer's need to the appropriate provider.
- Update and expand the capacity of OIT's primary data center and server infrastructure to meet UA's on-premises demand of academic and operational computing.
- Redesign OIT's data backup/restore and disaster recovery strategy to integrate cloud-based solutions that allow for proven, resilient and secure processes.
- Complete the replacement of core campus network appliances for wired and wireless networks for optimal network high-speed capacity.
- Continue to expand the footprint and capacity of Wi-Fi capabilities to keep pace with campus growth and demand for optimal wireless performance.

GOAL 2

Establish appropriate structure, tools, processes and skills to support a transition to a cloud-based ERP platform.

- Establish formalized IT governance structures and procedures to support collaborative, strategic decisions between OIT team members and UA stakeholders.
- Strengthen OIT's ability to implement and support enterprise technologies in a cloud environment by developing internal skills and capabilities.
- Establish and begin implementing foundational cloud-friendly processes and enterprise-standard tools that will support a future cloud ERP implementation.

GOAL 3

Identify areas to improve efficiencies, unifying and consolidating IT services where necessary.

- Continue to consolidate UA's multiple email environments and enterprise collaboration tools to provide a single, unified platform for students, faculty and staff.
- Continue promoting and establishing Consultants in Residents (CIRs) within large and complex OIT-supported business units.
- Leverage campus partnerships to provide consolidated services and solutions while reducing project and operational costs.
- Create efficiencies through business process improvement and automation.
- Continually review emerging technologies to support digital transformation opportunities.
- Investigate next generation communication and collaboration services to supplement current telecommunications offerings.

GOAL 4

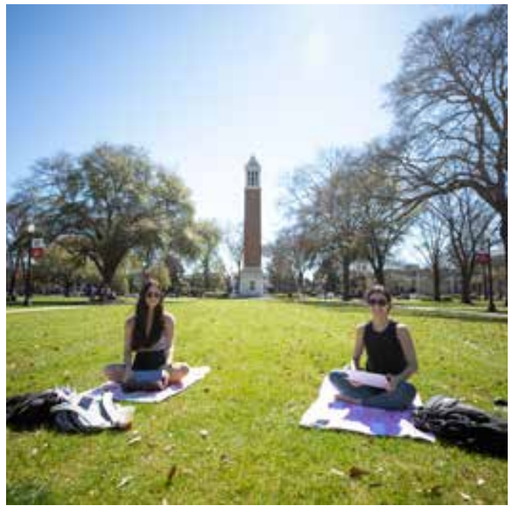
Champion and support effective and secure University management and governance processes.

- Develop and execute a strategic roadmap for building an effective, efficient and manageable Identity and Access Management Program.
- Evaluate, select and implement identity management tools and federated services to streamline identity management processes.
- Establish an OIT identity and access management team to better regulate user access to systems, applications, and services, and support enterprise tools that are focused on user account management.

GOAL 5

Provide skills and services in support of enterprise reporting and data analytics initiatives.

- In partnership with UA stakeholders, develop and execute a strategic roadmap for establishing effective and sustainable data management/governance processes.
- Select, procure and implement a data warehouse solution to meet enterprise reporting and analytics requirements.
- Increase knowledge and expertise of data analytics/business intelligence concepts and techniques among OIT staff and the UA community.
- Offer skilled OIT resources, including leveraging student talent, to support data analytics/business intelligence initiatives.



USER EXPERIENCE

Establish a consistent and reliable user experience for OIT services, tools and technologies.

GOAL 1

Improve and enhance self-service options for UA community members to quickly find answers to questions and resolve issues.

- Establish streamlined processes for students to easily connect various types of devices to campus Wi-Fi.
- Enhance self-service technology options, creating avenues for students, faculty and staff to quickly resolve issues.
- Enhance artificial intelligence tools to provide first-resolution support.

GOAL 2

Streamline the OIT customer experience.

- Enhance integrations between tools across OIT offerings.
- Identify services to support consolidated central authentication.
- Establish customer service training program for staff members, including student employees.
- Build out OIT's self-service portal to search all customer-facing knowledgebase articles and offer a one-stop shop for reporting issues, requesting assistance and initiating projects.

GOAL 3

Ensure all UA community members have access to a functional and accessible technology experience.

- Consider user experiences in technology to create a consistent, accessible experience in services.
- Evaluate newly developed or acquired digital resources to ensure accessibility or equivalent access.

GOAL 4

Provide reliable and consistent desktop support services for all supported operating systems.

- Provide consistent support for up-to-date operating systems on all supported devices.
- Continue to expand use of endpoint management systems including SCCM, Intune and Jamf.
- Continue to build out the OIT software catalog for self-service installations.

GOAL 5

Modernize and mature OIT's service management practices.

- Update change management and problem management practices to use modern tools.
- Conduct training for OIT on service management practices and procedures.
- Investigate implementation of more formal service management processes.

COMMUNITY + COLLABORATION

Foster a collaborative environment while building relationships between OIT and the UA community to understand and meet technology needs.

GOAL 1

Develop and invest in OIT team members to recruit and retain outstanding staff.

- Provide opportunities and resources that facilitate work-life balance.
- Offer mentoring programs, education and cross-training opportunities to develop team members.
- Equip and empower supervisors with resources and information to effectively lead their teams.

GOAL 2

Facilitate opportunities for collaboration and teamwork.

- Discover opportunities for cross-functional teams.
- Encourage collaboration among both project-driven and operational teams.

GOAL 3

Establish an organizational culture that values relationships.

- Provide opportunities for team members to build relationships.
- Establish strategic partnerships with vendors and other institutions.
- Build partnerships with UA community stakeholders.

GOAL 4

Increase awareness of IT services among the UA community.

- Participate in campus events.
- Deliver timely information on IT updates and news.
- Partner with on campus resources to reach students, faculty and staff.

GOAL 5

Educate UA community members of best practices, available software and IT services.

- Host interactive events and workshops to educate UA community of available tools and services.
- Utilize innovative communication channels and tactics to provide video guides.
- Enhance OIT's knowledgebase to provide quick tutorials and information.

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