UNCG Implements Banner Finance

The Finance module of Banner was implemented as scheduled on July 1, the start of the fiscal year. On July 6, UNCG successfully began conducting business in Banner Finance.

The financial data now housed in Banner Finance includes:
- Over $250 million of annual University expenditures
- Over $1 billion in fixed assets
- Over $100 million in foundation assets

Anyone who conducts financial transactions is affected by the shift away from the legacy FRS system to Banner Finance. Business Affairs has sponsored numerous workshops designed for the 200+ members of the UNCG client community who need to become familiar with the new system.

The UNCG Banner Finance Implementation Project began in 2004 and is led by Steve Rhew, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance in Business Affairs. This project team is composed of Business Affairs staff, and representatives from across the University. ITS staff from MIS, the Office of Data Management, and the Database Administration group have been working in concert with the members of the UNCG project team on the IT Banner Finance Implementation Project, a hardware and development-focused subset of the larger project.

The Finance module is the fourth of five major components of Banner implemented at UNCG. Prior implementations include Student (with Student Accounts Receivable), Financial Aid, and Alumni. The Banner Finance Project relied on the prior implementation of Banner 7, the transition of the Banner environment from VMS to UNIX, and implementation of the Operational Data Store (ODS). There were five other related, supporting projects as well. The project to implement the fifth major Banner component, Banner Human Resources, will kick off in September of 2006, with a planned go-live in January 2008. Laura Young, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enterprise Administrative Applications, will lead the project.

UNCG was the first UNC System school to begin implementing Banner starting in 1996. Today there are thirteen UNC System schools that are implementing Banner under the collaborative umbrella of the UNC Shared Services Alliance.

Laptop Support Center Opens in McIver Building

On August 9, the doors opened to the Laptop Support Center (LSC). The LSC is an outgrowth of the Student Laptop Initiative (SLI), an Academic Affairs-envisioned and ITS-supported initiative that recommends Fall 2006 entering freshmen purchase a wireless laptop computer. In Fall 2007, a wireless laptop computer will be required for all incoming full-time freshmen. The LSC will provide service and support for laptops purchased through the SLI. For more details about the SLI, go to http://its.uncg.edu/Laptop/.

Services provided at the LSC, for laptops purchased through the SLI, include hardware support (repairing and replacing hard disks, malfunctioning memory, keyboards, optical drives, etc.), software support (including reloading UNCG software included on SLI laptops), and wireless support.

The center will operate out of two rooms in the McIver building. The Consulting and Repair area, located in 354 McIver, is now open to handle issues that require professional assistance. Later this fall, the Assisted Help area (105 McIver) will open and serve as a “self-help” facility. An official “ribbon-cutting” ceremony is being planned for early fall.
UNCG Technology Project News

Below are updates on major technology projects:

**University Wireless Project – Phase Two**
UNCG is expected to complete Phase Two of the University Wireless Project by September 30. This project is a continuation of the work from Phase One involving the installation of wireless technology infrastructure on campus. Phase One work was completed in July 2005. Phase Two has extended wireless to all major academic buildings, and will expand wireless to common areas on campus, such as College Avenue, the Fountain, and the Science Quad.

**SSN University ID Conversion**
**SSN Employee ID Modifications**
The University currently has two projects underway to eliminate the use of the Social Security number (SSN) as the primary number used in administrative processes on campus that require a unique identifier. The move to assign an identification number stems from passage of the 2005 N.C. Identity Theft Protection Act, which restricts the collection and use of the SSN. During the fall semester, all UNCG students, faculty, staff, and alumni will be assigned a generated University ID number. The number ranges will begin with 88 and 89 prefixes. New identification numbers will also be assigned to those who are currently using a non-SSN identification number.

**UNIX Web Server Upgrade Project**
To improve usability, reliability, and security, ITS has been working over the past year to upgrade the UNIX Web server. The upgrade will provide enhanced software and services to Web developers who host Web sites on the server. This includes the ability to utilize PHP, a scripting language well-suited for Web development. The Web3 team, a technical advisory group to the UNCG Web Oversight Committee, has provided assistance to the project team on usability issues. To increase Web server reliability, a redundant server has been set up. Security features include moving the Web server behind the firewall and ultimately requiring Web developers to connect to the server and move files in a secure manner. For more information about the upgrade, go to http://its.uncg.edu/News/2006/June/WWW_Upsgrade/.

The project is expected to be complete by the end of August.

**Blackboard Enhancements**
As of August 7, the five-year-old Blackboard environment has been replaced by a new environment with updated software and new hardware.

The Blackboard enhancements focus on improving the performance and reliability of Blackboard. The new Blackboard environment features an increased storage space and upgraded hardware and supporting software.

The Blackboard environment also includes a development environment which will provide an opportunity for developers to test their work without impacting clients who are using Blackboard at the same time.

Although the Blackboard software has been upgraded to version 7.0, new training for faculty and staff who wish to use the system is not necessary.

**BlackBerry Purchases**
Beginning September 1, departments and other campus entities can purchase select BlackBerry models through ITS. Currently, this service is not available to individuals. These devices have built-in functions such as wireless email, which can integrate with the e-Spartan email system, and a wireless Web browser, calendar, and address book.

ITS will provide support for the following BlackBerry models: BlackBerry 7130e and BlackBerry 7250. For details about each model and user guides, please go to http://its.uncg.edu/Blackberry.

Cost and ordering information is available at http://its.uncg.edu/Blackberry/Rollout. Departmental orders may be placed by contacting 6-TECH Technical Support at 256-TECH (8324).