UNCG Saves Money on Computer Hardware
Campus-wide Program Provides Volume Discounts

University departments have saved up to $303,722 in computer hardware costs through the Campus-wide Hardware Procurement (CHP) program, which provides volume discounts negotiated with vendors. This savings rate is based on a 20% savings over the costs if the same equipment had been purchased through State contract. (Because educational discounts vary, sometimes exceeding State pricing, it is not possible to precisely estimate CHP savings if purchases had gone through the Higher Ed discount program, but a minimum savings estimate is $140K). Since the program began in mid-April 2008, 1049 computers (739 desktops and 310 laptops) have been purchased. This represents sales of almost $1.2 million, said Kevin Latimer, Director of Technical Services & Architecture in ITS. Dell and Lenovo are the two vendors currently participating in the CHP program. Departments may order Dell computers and accessories through its online point-of-sale store. Lenovo accepts orders by telephone, and an online point-of-sale is being developed.

In addition to cost savings, loaner laptops may be available during repairs to those who purchase a laptop through the program. Benefits to the University include standardized hardware, a UNCG-configured and tested software load (image), and better management of computers throughout their lifecycle – an important objective of the UNC system PACE (effectiveness and efficiency) initiative. For more information about the CHP program, visit http://its.uncg.edu/Technology_Purchases/CHP/.

UNCG Introduces New Ad-Hoc Reporting Tool
WebFOCUS Dashboard Offers Flexibility, Ease of Use

More than 300 faculty and staff who work with student enrollment data will soon be able to create customized ad-hoc reports through a new reporting dashboard.

Laura Kelley (Academic Systems & Student Achievement) said the dashboard provides a tool that a wide range of people can use for their reporting requirements. “It allows any user access to their data and the ability to customize the data that comes back to them.” The dashboard is built in WebFOCUS, an enterprise-level business intelligence application suite supported by ITS.

The Web-based dashboard is interactive and simple to use. It enables those who are accustomed to running predefined reports the flexibility of selecting only those data fields they need in their reports. This eliminates the task of later having to discard superfluous data.

Earlier this year, senior management in each of the University’s five divisions viewed a demonstration of the dashboard. Office of Data Management staff in ITS collaborated with Academic Affairs to develop a dashboard for users of student enrollment data.

Representatives of an advising group to the Provost’s office are testing the dashboard. Lucy Robbins, Director of Undergraduate Student Services in the Bryan School states, “This is a great tool that simplifies the reporting process.” Other divisions are considering this type of reporting interface.

For more information about the dashboard, contact Laura Kelley at 334-4489 or lskelley@uncg.edu.
Banner 8 Upgrade

Banner 8, a major upgrade to UNCG’s Banner system went live on March 9, 2009. This upgrade is a version upgrade to the Banner system that supports university operations such as finance, payroll, advancement, student records, and financial aid. Major Banner upgrades are released approximately every two years. Clients such as UNCG must keep their Banner systems up-to-date in order to maintain support from the vendor.

This upgrade of Banner includes technical, functional, and security enhancements. Laura Young, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enterprise Administrative Applications, notes that “Banner 8 provides the ability do multi-year encumbering for contacts and grants, algorithmic packaging for financial aid awards (allowing awards to be segmented to different populations) and other new functionalities.”

Representatives from all five divisions of UNCG served as client coordinators during this project. The upgrade to Banner 8 was scheduled for Spring Break to minimize the number of people affected by an outage of Banner while the system was being upgraded and tested. For more information about the upgrade, visit http://banner.uncg.edu/banner8/faqs/.

Campus Technology Updates

Google Search Appliance

In February, ITS implemented Google Search Appliance (GSA), a Web search engine that offers more functionality than what is available with Google’s free Custom Search Engine. With GSA, Web users are now able to access more content, including intranets and databases, though a universal search feature. As ITS continues to roll out this service, Web administrators will be able to better control content available to various user groups based on their need to access such content, thus providing enhanced security. For more information about GSA, contact 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324).

Windows Vista, 7

Based on feedback from University computing committees, ITS has decided not to pursue the campus-wide implementation of the Windows Vista operating system. In its place, ITS is investigating Vista’s successor, Windows 7, which has not been released. The timetable to implement Windows 7 on campus has not been determined.

iSpartan Faculty/Staff Pilot

A pilot is underway in ITS to test the functionality of iSpartan email and calendaring for faculty and staff users. iSpartan is UNCG’s implementation of the Google Apps for Education (GAFE) service. A group of ITS staff members are evaluating how GAFE’s email and calendaring solutions match up with what users are accustomed to experiencing in Lotus Notes. ITS plans to begin opting other faculty and staff into the pilot later this fall. Visit http://its.uncg.edu/Projects/Apps_for_Education/ for details about iSpartan.

Security Awareness Training

ITS will offer monthly security awareness workshops from June through December. The training is a University expectation for faculty and staff who work with restricted data. The four-hour workshops will be held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. To register, go to https://utlc.uncg.edu/workshops/ and click on the Security Awareness Training link. Online training is available in Blackboard. Contact 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324) for more information.

Upcoming Changes to Enhance Security of University Computers

Historically, University network services have been a one-size-fits-all affair. Unfortunately, this approach may not adequately meet the needs of clients with security and compliance concerns. This year, ITS will initiate pilots of new network services designed to significantly increase our security while hopefully minimizing the impact to most end users. The plan for the future is to have multiple tiers of network access, each of which provides protection appropriate for the computers assigned to that tier.

The first step in implementing this plan is to pilot and deploy a more secure network suitable for the majority of campus users; we are referring to this planned offering as the General Computing Network (GCN). The GCN will differ from the current network service offering in several ways including:

- **Private addressing.** In the GCN, computers will be given a “private” Internet Protocol (IP) address and will communicate with the Internet through a network appliance managed by ITS.
- **Proxy services.** IT will be providing a security appliance that will filter Web page requests for malicious content.
- **Desktop management.** Computers assigned to the GCN will receive assistance from ITS in the form of remote patching and software updates.

The current network will continue to be available for the foreseeable future. But it is expected that the majority of University computers (and all computers used to work with sensitive and restricted data) will be transitioned into the GCN through an extended transition process. Later, computers that work with highly sensitive data will be moved from the GCN into a higher security network. Planning for this next tier will not begin until the GCN transition is well underway.

— ITS Security Office