Hege Library
Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies

2016-2021

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Executive Summary

Building upon the 2015 plan *Hege Library Strategic Directions, 2014-2017: The Library as “Academic Commons”*, we determined the need to develop a subordinate *Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies* that would be built on the mission, vision, values, and strategic directions of the Academic Commons, but would also describe a vision for the role that learning technologies would play at Guilford and how they would be supported by and through the Hege Library.

Although we might assume that specific technologies would be the focus of much of the *Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies*, this plan focuses to a much greater extent on the relationships, environments, and experiences that we will develop as we work to utilize appropriate learning technologies in support our academic mission. This plan focuses on an overarching ecosystem for learning technologies in support of what Guilford does particularly well – focus on teaching, learning, and research.

In particular, the plan describes the **collaborative role** that the Library will bring to its work with our community. We believe that the faculty, students, and staff expect no less of us and that our success in fostering the effective use of learning technologies must help to foster a cohesive community of practice in the following manner:

- Explore innovation together
- Build upon the experiences and perspectives of others
- Prioritize institutional transformation
- Leverage the foundation of Guilford’s IT infrastructure
- Align the digital and physical worlds
- Collaborate with our academic partners

Because of the changes occurring at the institution and the evolving campus planning efforts, this *Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies* must be able to respond to current parameters and directions, while also being nimble enough to react to changing conditions and emerging needs. To ensure that the plan can adapt to such changes, a set of **enduring principles** has been developed which will guide our work over the next five years and beyond:

- Partnership excellence
- Student-centered and faculty-focused application of technology
- Technology focused by the Guilford perspective
- Priorities driven by the College’s progress
- Responsiveness to changing institutional plans and priorities
- Capacity building
- Simultaneous service to multiple needs
Based on the discussions held with members of the campus community and the library staff and leadership over the past year, the following *six strategic directions* have been identified to boldly move forward the use of learning technologies that will be appropriate for the College, consistent with community needs for technology, aligned with Guilford’s enduring institutional values, and sustainable in the long-term:

1. Develop effective Governance for learning technologies
2. Enhance the learning management system (LMS) environment
3. Enable innovation and discovery through the Academic Commons
4. Provide stewardship for the College’s learning spaces
5. Build a cohesive digital academic environment
6. Focus on professional development

With the establishment of the new *Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory*, the implementation of the new Canvas learning management system, and the arrival of three new colleagues in the Research and Educational Services (RES) group in Hege Library, the stage is already set for significant progress in creating a far-reaching learning technology ecosystem at Guilford College.

The full plan is described in detail on the pages that follow.
Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies
2016-2021

Introduction

In developing the strategic plan for the Hege Library and redefining its role as the Academic Commons of the College, its leadership and staff, in partnership with key members of the Guilford community, have defined a new path that reaffirms the centrality of the Library at the core of the College’s academic mission. Within that planning process, we identified a set of key values and principles about the collaborative ways in which the Library would lead, partner, and serve in the pursuit of Guilford’s most critical academic goals, functioning as the “cornerstone for teaching, learning, research, and scholarship at Guilford College.”

The Library as “Academic Commons” is an ambitious plan to leverage our place within the College and to provide significant new value to the academic community. To be successful, we must look beyond historical library roles as traditionally applied. To that end, we must pursue an ongoing process to reconsider how our spaces, resources, expertise, and staff energies might best serve the Guilford community, both within the Hege Library and across the campus. We have initiated a process of continual transformation to meet the emerging needs of our faculty and students, our changing academic programs, our responses to challenges and opportunities in our environment, and new approaches to teaching, learning, and research developed here and elsewhere.

Most importantly, we are realigning our own functions, approaches, and responsibilities to maximize the use of all of our resources, particularly our staff. We already have witnessed a new culture developing within the Library that builds upon the traditions of our profession, while also reshaping roles to take full advantage of changing pedagogies, a broader and more blended purview of academic responsibilities, and the ongoing advancements in digital information and information technologies. We believe that the Library can play a vital role as an agent of change and as an engine of exploration and renewal. We have defined a role for ourselves that is ambitious, and we believe that we can help support the changes occurring throughout the College in both positive and profound ways.

At the completion of the Library’s planning effort and the beginning of the evolution toward the Academic Commons, it became clear that a subsequent and aligned planning effort was required to more fully integrate learning technologies into an expanded agenda for the Library. This document represents that complementary plan.
Furthering the Plan for The Library as “Academic Commons”

In recognition of the role that digital information technologies can play in enhancing the work of the academic community and the significant levels of support required on a college campus to more fully realize that potential, we developed this Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies that builds upon the Academic Commons plan. We must not only regularly consider the role that advanced information technology might play across the entire spectrum of College’s teaching, learning, and research activities, but we must be intentional about the ways we need to work together to successfully integrate technology into our academic pursuits.

While the application of advanced technologies to our academic enterprise is not a goal in and of itself, new forms of digital information, electronic communication, and information technology often will serve as a catalyst that can shape effective new pedagogical approaches and improve desired outcomes. Enabling “scholarly exploration” or “creativity and innovation,” as described in the plan for the Academic Commons will require Library staff to assimilate the various roles assumed by our hybrid organization; combining “Library Services” and “Learning Technologies.” We intend to actively and deliberately shape that transformation in a way that best serves Guilford College.

Through the generous support of the State of North Carolina, Hege Library has received a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant for the purposes of developing a comprehensive technology plan for Guilford College Hege Library – the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies. This plan has been deeply connected to the strategic directions and aspirations described in our overarching Library plan, which was purposefully written to support and advance the College’s institutional plans, strategies, and priorities, even as they are evolving for Guilford.

To ensure that the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies is fully aligned with and dependent upon the Hege Library Strategic Directions, 2014-2017: The Library as “Academic Commons,” its overarching definitions are included for reference herein:

**Mission of the Library**

*In furthering institutional values and academic principles, Hege Library is a cornerstone for teaching, learning, research, and scholarship at Guilford College. The Library leads and partners within its community to foster a culture of scholarly exploration and experimentation, to promote creativity and innovation, and to provide the resources and services that place Guilford at the forefront of liberal education within our global society.*
Vision for the Library

*Be a symbol of academic excellence and institutional distinctiveness in furthering innovation through collaboration*

The Library’s Strategic Directions

- Advance the development of the Hege Library as the College’s “Academic Commons”
- Further the Library’s educational role within the learning enterprise
- Develop collections as intellectually and culturally responsive to the experiential learning environment and multiculturalism
- Re-create the Library as a catalyst for propelling innovation in teaching and learning

Values for Success within the Academic Commons

*In its plan for the Academic Commons, the Library articulated the following values to provide a foundation for success, and to support our flexibility in seizing new opportunities for growth and development:*

- The Library as Creation Space
- Partnership and Collaborations
- Meaningful Discovery
- Technological Enrichment
- Culture of Assessment
- Universal Design for Learning
- Professional Advancement

Each of the above statements also serves as a defining parameter for the *Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies*; they form the fabric upon which this plan is described and they are assumed as part of our reality and our identity as a library.

Defining Learning Technologies

As a foundation for the strategic plan that would guide the use of learning technologies at Guilford, we first needed to develop an agreement about what that term actually means within our institutional context.

Firstly, it is important to note that during the planning process, we shifted from the use of the term “Instructional Technology” (which we felt implied a somewhat narrow scope of technologies utilized strictly within an instructional setting) to the broader term “learning technologies.” We felt that this inclusive term represented a more integral
role throughout Guilford’s holistic academic environment, on and off campus, and more accurately reflected the scope in which we believe we can offer the greatest value to the academic mission.

Secondly, the term “technologies” can be used in many ways. Conversations within our community-engaged planning exercises identified a wide variety of elements that might be considered “technologies” in the broadest sense of the word and that might be employed to enrich teaching and learning. Specific responses were revealing in their scope and depth; they included (in no particular order) “technologies” such as physical books and journals, textbooks, internet connectivity and wireless networking, chalkboards/whiteboards, audiovisual and multimedia resources, digital storytelling, laptops, the learning management system, classroom furnishings, programming languages, statistical packages, Google Apps and Google Drive, presentation spaces, scientific test equipment, web content, screens and projectors, the Microsoft Office suite, Read & Write Gold, portfolios/ePortfolios, student/faculty online services, smart phones/tablets and mobile apps, eBooks and digital journals, electronic mail/messaging, specialized academic software, open-source course material, calculators, geographic information systems, adaptive technologies, lecture capture systems, and a host of other tools and techniques used to enhance or support teaching, learning, and research – even yoga and meditation were described by some as “technologies”!

Many of the items on this list could indeed be supported by the Library in its role as the steward of learning technologies. Some (such as programming languages and scientific test equipment), are the domain of faculty experts in their disciplines. Campus digital infrastructure, such as internet connectivity, wireless networking, and electronic mail are already managed by Information Technology & Services (IT&S) as part of its overall institutional technology portfolio, even though many of those functions are heavily relied upon for academic work. Physical learning space components (such as chalkboards/whiteboards, classroom furniture and lecterns) are traditionally the responsibility of facilities services. Assistive technologies are managed by disabilities services. Still others (such as calculators, textbooks, and web content) are simply not within the scope of support expected of the Library or within the Academic Commons, even though faculty actively use them to enhance teaching and learning.

For the purpose of identifying the stewardship and support responsibilities of the Hege Library, we adopt the following definition:

“Learning Technologies” represents the use of digital information and digital information technology tools in ways that enhance and promote academic work, in and out of the classroom, as well as on and off campus. We believe that this term refers to a diverse set of digital tools used to augment, facilitate, and restructure the teaching, learning, and research environments. Beyond simply making those tools available, the term also refers to a cohesive ecosystem in which such tools are examined, explored for certain purposes, piloted, learned/trained, and ultimately applied in order to capture opportunities and respond to specific challenges and priorities across the full
spectrum of the teaching/learning environment of the College, thus serving as catalysts for propelling academic innovation and enhancing the learning experience.

Using this definition, we can more clearly identify our role in supporting learning technologies, as it impacts teaching, learning and research.

Academic institutions support their learning technology efforts in varying ways, placing the responsibility for their instructional, educational, and/or academic technologies within one of a variety of organizational settings. At Guilford, we believe that the Library as the “Academic Commons” is ideally positioned for effective stewardship, because of our stated belief that success comes only partially through the use of technology itself. We understand that the successful application of learning technologies at the College will be guided by three powerful and interrelated themes:

1. **Relationships:** In working with members of the faculty and with students, we understand that their ability to more fully advantage the technologies we support will be enhanced by the depth of the relationships that we can form with them within the course of a few brief interactions or over long periods of working together. By listening deeply to their expressed aims and aspirations, we deepen our understanding of their comfort in using complex tools, thus enabling us to help identify the next steps of their development and devise strategies for supporting them in their transition.

2. **Environments:** Whether we are exploring new approaches to teaching and learning within the Academic Commons, or transferring lessons learned into the College’s formal learning environments (either physical or digital), we understand that the quality of the overall learning technologies ecosystem will significantly affect the ability of the technology to make a difference, and we will enhance the potential of that ecosystem by insuring that it is well-designed, accessible, and expertly used.

3. **Experiences:** We do not believe in the concept of technology as a driver. Our work is focused on exploring and supporting learning technologies that can create truly transformational experiences for our faculty and students that result in teaching and learning more inclusively, effectively, and engagingly. In particular, we work to achieve the president’s vision that Guilford College will “become known for designing world-class learning experiences” (Inspiring Distinction - the inaugural address of President Jane K. Fernandes, August 26, 2015).

Ultimately, campus efforts to leverage the power of learning technologies will be successful because of our focus beyond the technologies themselves, and more importantly upon the whole environment in which they are explored and used. By focusing holistically on the learning experience, we can meaningfully and creatively direct the efforts of our modest, albeit motivated, team in ways that truly enhance the excellence of the College.
Defining Our Collaborative Role

Little of our work to support learning technologies is possible or practical within a vacuum; much depends on the ways in which we build upon and magnify the efforts of others, explore the questions that others may ask, and facilitate the sharing of ideas that others have generated. We do not dictate new/changing learning technologies to the academic community; we strive to support the community in identifying technologies that are most useful, and help to further their integration in ways that are most appropriate. We bring our own unique skills and perspectives to the table, but our most profound and productive work will be in close partnership with key stakeholders. Thus, in order to provide meaningful stewardship and support of learning technologies at Guilford that will be both responsible and sustainable, Hege Library professionals will work in the following collaborative ways:

Explore Innovation Together:
Our role is to help support innovation and discovery by the Guilford community; we collaborate in an ongoing way with faculty and assist in providing a rich learning technologies ecosystem in which they can explore new concepts and technologies that might be applicable to their learning design. Our role is to provide encouragement and inspiration to think beyond current practices and see how appropriate technologies might create more profound learning experiences. We also will help form and support communities of interest and practice where people can explore together and can expand their professional growth and direction.

Build Upon the Experiences and Perspectives of Others:
Our academic community consists of many individual experts with varied talents, motivations, and perspectives. While the Library staff will grow and evolve expertise that will enable the use of learning technologies, we also will work to ensure that the College can take advantage of the experiences of other experts among and beyond us. We will serve as a clearing house and a bridge between those who both can share their experience and partner with others to foster innovation.

Prioritize Institutional Transformation:
Some of our efforts will benefit individual initiative, but we need to be mindful of concepts and directions that will help advance technologies serving large segments of the College. Collaborating with the entire academic community, we will work to guide processes that explore, prioritize, pilot, fund, and install large-scale learning technology systems such as the learning management system, digital repositories, multimedia content systems, presentation systems, active and collaborative learning environments, and other campus-wide services. Although these efforts will need to be particularly collaborative, it will be our role to ensure that such resources are well-designed for Guilford’s pedagogical needs, well-aligned with academic intent, well-supported and maintained, accessible, and well-utilized by the campus.
**Leverage the Foundation of Guilford’s IT Infrastructure:**
The College's most effective use of learning technologies will be built upon a robust and reliable infrastructure provided by our colleagues in Information Technology & Services (IT&S). In particular, we must collaborate with IT&S to maximize and extend the use of their campus resources and core services in a positive partnership. We can help inform the ongoing growth and development of the infrastructure that IT&S provides, so that it can best serve the diverse needs of the academic community. The Library’s relationship with IT&S is paramount on both the strategic and operational levels. We need to include them regularly in our planning activities, and be partners with each other, as our respective priorities intersect. In addition, our tactical efforts (e.g., service delivery, troubleshooting, etc.) will often be intertwined.

**Align the Digital and Physical Worlds:**
Guilford’s teaching, learning, and research activities often will take place at the intersection of the College’s physical and digital environments; they must support and enhance each other rather than conflict and contrast. Over time, modifications will need to be made within the Academic Commons to support new initiatives (most notably, as this plan is under development, the establishment of the *Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory* on Hege’s second level). Moreover, the effective use of learning technologies may require modifications to other campus physical learning spaces, so that the digital environments and physical environments may work more seamlessly together. To that end, we must work closely with our colleagues in Administration to ensure that learning technologies are well-designed and deployed within the College’s physical spaces, especially our classrooms.

**Collaborate with Our Academic Partners:**
Because of our commitment to enhancing the academic environment across the campus and throughout the curriculum, we are committed to strong working relationships with our partners within the Academic Commons, i.e., Faculty Development, Research and Creative Endeavors, the Honors Program, Accessibility Resources, and the Learning Commons. Their consideration of digital technologies will be key drivers for the use of learning technologies to directly impact the student experience at Guilford, and we are committed to meeting their needs, as well as depending on their guidance in the ways in which the learning technologies environment should be shaped and adapted.
The Plan for Learning Technologies

We believe that the work within the Academic Commons and the ways that it impacts and supports the teaching, learning, and research efforts of the College will be best served by adopting a set of overarching principles and values. While the learning technologies efforts of the Hege Library and its community partners should and will be guided by the Values for Success developed in the Library’s strategic plan, the following set of principles have become particularly relevant to the development of this Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies and will continue to provide direction in supporting the ongoing work to accomplish the plan’s strategies, goals, and priorities.

Our Guiding Principles

Our success as the Academic Commons will depend on the ways that we approach our work to further integrate learning technologies into Guilford’s distinct academic mission, and thus, we believe that the following guiding principles are critical:

- Partnership excellence
- Student-centered and faculty-focused application of technology
- Technology focused by the Guilford perspective
- Priorities driven by the College’s progress
- Responsiveness to changing institutional plans and priorities
- Capacity building
- Simultaneous service to multiple needs

Partnership Excellence:
Collaboration and partnerships will be the hallmark of our ongoing efforts to support learning technologies. We must provide a strong foundation of support through the Academic Commons, and we must also define and shape the College’s learning technologies agenda collaboratively and accomplish it together.

Student-Centered and Faculty-Focused Application of Technology:
We understand that the use of learning technologies at Guilford College must be student-centered and faculty-focused, and we intend that the processes to discover new technologies, explore their use, adopt them, and support them until they are no longer needed, also must be first and foremost student-centered and faculty-focused. As we succeed in our work and responsibilities to create an effective learning technologies environment, we expect to help the educational community facilitate access for diverse learners, engage different learning styles, improve academic productivity, and help the College “become known for designing world class learning experiences.”
Technology focused by the Guilford Perspective:
Technology is a means to an end. While it is human nature to focus on the interesting and exciting things that technology might help us achieve, we believe that often, the best technology is no technology at all. We must balance simplicity and complexity and define solutions that are both appropriate, accessible, and sustainable. At all times, we must also consider how scalable solutions may be when considering their reach to a broader audience, and we must explore the benefits of adopting universal design principles proactively, in a way that is both fiscally and socially responsible.

Priorities Driven by the College’s Progress:
Establishing priorities is always difficult within a complex academic environment. We can do anything we believe to be important; we cannot do everything that seems to be useful. We can enable individual progress, but we must also explore and build functions and systems that contribute to the greater good. Balancing the need for individual success and institutional progress must be a regular focus of our discussions and decisions.

Responsiveness to Changing Institutional Plans and Priorities:
As Guilford continues its journey under new leadership and as it contends with the new assumptions that it faces and with the new opportunities that it chooses to pursue, its institutional plans and priorities undoubtedly will shift. Although key elements, values, and structures of the College will endure, significant campus directions and priorities will change over time. The Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies must be flexible and adaptable in the face of campus environmental change and the College’s evolving strategies to achieve its most important goals.

Capacity Building:
The Library as “Academic Commons” is a plan designed to make the most of limited human, financial, and other resources. We have devised a direction for the Library that accomplishes institutional goals and supports individual progress, and we have determined a way to do so that is bold in its intent, while modest in its approach. We have made significant progress by re-purposing existing positions and redeploying funds from former priorities. We have painted our vision and have sought external grants and donations to start us along the way. We also have found willing partners in our work to utilize learning technologies creatively, and used those relationships to bring other people into the fold. We intend to redouble those efforts. We also believe that success begets success, and that the College ultimately will find a way to fund those activities that are accomplishing its greatest goals in a way that is sustainable and focused on future success.

Simultaneous Service to Multiple Needs:
With limited staff and financial resources, we regularly need to find ways that one initiative can satisfy multiple needs at the same time. For example, creating the Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory on the second level of Hege Library provides a location to test promising new learning technologies (including furnishings) in an exploratory space, creates a visible and tangible manifestation of the Academic
Commons in the Library, and provides an opportunity to house several key partners nearby. Similarly, the installation of the new Canvas LMS system will provide a better digital learning environment for our students, shed faculty frustrations with Moodle, move a key element of the College’s digital infrastructure to the cloud, and position the campus to more readily address the desire for hybrid and online classes. In these cases, one carefully planned project has had multiple advantages for the community.

Built upon these principles as a foundation, the following strategic directions will help to create a cohesive and robust ecosystem for learning technologies at the College and will help us to build capacity where little had existed in the past. These strategic directions will also help continue to build upon the work of others, as we leverage skills and momentum again and again.

**Articulation of Strategic Directions for Learning Technologies**

Some elements of the learning technologies environment that we intend to create at Guilford currently exist, but they are not yet aligned in a way that is both cohesive and robust. There is considerable work to do before we can truly contribute to a larger campus effort to enhance teaching, learning, and research through the thoughtful and purposeful use of learning technologies. To be effective in this pursuit, we believe that we need to provide stewardship and action in six key strategic directions.

1. **Develop Effective Governance for Learning Technologies:**

If Guilford’s purposeful use of learning technologies is to be truly student-centered and faculty-focused, it will be necessary for our stewardship efforts to be intentionally aligned with the faculty governance structure. A governance body with appropriate representation from faculty, students, academic leadership, IT&S, and other constituencies with whom we work will serve the kind of robust academic support environment required for strategic progress.

The essential roles that governance should play are:

- **Advice and Guidance:** The governance body should provide advice about emerging needs of stakeholders, consider the advisability of gathering broader campus feedback (including frequency and methodology), and further develop the overarching principles and values of Guilford’s learning technologies environment. The governance body should also provide feedback on candidates for staffing changes.

- **Communications:** The governance body can play a significant role in communications, channeling the needs, aspirations, and priorities of the community to us and helping us describe our directions and major plans back to the community.
- **Policies**: Policies surrounding the use of learning technologies should be approved and implemented through the governance body. Governance must give any necessary policies the “weight of the institution,” so that they can have the desired effect.

- **Priorities and Direction**: Demand for enhancing the overall learning technologies environment naturally come from multiple diverse audiences, and such initiatives will compete for resources, energy, and attention. Governance can help to define College critical priorities and directions in a way that maximizes the impact on the whole institution. Such a body can help decide which new initiatives will be most important within the learning technologies ecosystem so that we can invest in them appropriately. The group should also help us decide what traditional functions or services should be terminated.

- **Resource Planning and Acquisition**: Sustaining the learning technologies environment, both operationally and in future projects, will take resources of various kinds. In some cases, additional resources will be required, and the institution will want advice from the governance body to determine which investments are the highest and best use of the College’s limited resources.

- **Project Planning**: Governance can play a key role as a sounding board at the beginning of any new project, and it can help to ensure that others at the institution are doing their part to bring each project to successful completion. In particular, governance can assist in defining the lessons learned and evaluating the effectiveness of a project’s eventual outcomes.

- **Strategic Planning**: All of the issues above are even more pronounced within a strategic planning process, and governance should play a key role before, during, and after any subsequent planning processes.

We also understand the governance body must be intertwined with faculty governance and administrative leadership in positive and productive ways.

**Strategic Priorities:**

A. **Learning Technologies Governance Committee**: Work with faculty governance and the academic administration to develop a governance body (working title “Learning Technologies Advisory Committee”) that can advise the Director of Hege Library and Learning Technologies in developing plans, priorities, and projects that enhance, coordinate, and maximize the learning technologies ecosystem at Guilford. The Chair of the committee should be a member of the faculty; meeting agendas and proposed projects of the committee should be set by the chair in close collaboration with the Director. The committee should help integrate the plans and efforts of the Hege Library and its key stakeholders into the academic work of the College, while also helping to ensure collaboration, cooperation, and alignment with other necessary partners. Because of the need for strong collaboration with IT&S, the Director of Institutional Technology should be a member of this governance committee.

B. **Connection with Governance Supporting IT&S**: Support the efforts of the Director of Information Technology & Services as he works to define their governance approach to guide Information Technology & Services in their work.
Because of the intersecting nature of the work of IT&S with Hege Library, there should be direct overlap of membership across the two governance bodies.

C. **Connection with the Guilford College Senior Team:** As we work to enhance the ecosystem surrounding the College’s use of learning technologies, we will need to work closely to align our work with current and emerging priorities of the institution (e.g., the current effort toward online and hybrid learning, as well helping to achieve the President’s vision for designing world-class learning experiences) and to help the institution understand the resources necessary to capture those important opportunities. As a result, we will need to develop an ongoing mechanism to bring our plans to the Senior Team for their support, direction, prioritization, and action.

Creating an effective governance structure that can provide stewardship of the entire learning technologies agenda will be the most important first step in creating a robust ecosystem in which those technologies, resources, and efforts can be applied to enhancing the teaching, learning, and research environment of the College.

2. **Enhance the Learning Management System (LMS) Environment:**

The College’s learning management system (LMS) serves as a repository for the work that faculty and students do together in the context of their course activities. When used effectively, it represents the details described in the course syllabus and records much of the participation and progress of each participant. It serves as a single place to find assignments, it facilitates discourse about important questions posed by the course, and it provides an opportunity for students to know their grading status in the course in real-time.

In an ideal setting, each student could depend upon the LMS to help them manage their responsibilities of all of their courses for the semester. It would make their academic lives easier, so they can concentrate more fully on course materials rather than course logistics. In an ideal environment, each faculty could rely on the robust and functional LMS to always be available and to actually make their course preparation and administration easier – to save them time. Unfortunately, the current Moodle LMS has been far from ideal at Guilford for some time, and participation in the LMS is comparatively low. Satisfaction with the tool is even lower.

Because of overarching concerns about Moodle, the College decided to prioritize its replacement through a collaborative process even as this plan was being developed; it was clear that resolving this ongoing frustration would be one of the highest priorities of the **Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies**, and the College’s initiatives toward creating new blended and online courses would be hampered if they were required to begin that work within Moodle. In a process that reflected many of the approaches, principles, and values of this plan, the Canvas LMS from Instructure was tested, overwhelmingly approved and implemented with strong faculty support.
The initial implementation of Canvas will be completed by the beginning of the 2016 fall semester, and the expected benefits of this new platform (that is gaining significant market share throughout higher education) is expected to be significant. In addition, removing Moodle (along with the long-standing frustrations about the tool) from our environment should result in a major improvement to the College’s learning technology ecosystem almost immediately.

**Strategic Priorities:**

A. **Convert Course Materials to Canvas:** Working with colleagues in IT&S, the Registrar, and the faculty, complete the implementation of Canvas and the transfer of former class materials from Moodle so that faculty can begin preparations for their fall courses this summer.

B. **Develop a Support Ecosystem for Canvas Utilization:** Because it is new to the Guilford learning technologies environment, we must take time to develop training and other resources that can help to support the use of Canvas among the faculty, students, and staff. Training sessions, reminders of useful features, videos about using advanced options, special-topic discussions, lunch-and-learn sessions, web pages, and other resources should be developed to provide a supportive environment for those utilizing this exciting new platform.

C. **Facilitate Pilot Online Courses:** As faculty prepare to offer pilot versions of new online courses, we will partner with them to support their work in Canvas and to help develop standards and best practices with an eye to providing a high-quality educational experience at a distance.

D. **Build Canvas Utilization:** We expect that early adoption of Canvas will be at similar levels to the past utilization of Moodle, at least for the first few semesters. To more fully leverage this important tool, particularly for the advantages that it provides to our students, we will work from semester to semester to build Canvas adoption (help more faculty to use Canvas, encourage existing faculty users to publish more of their courses in Canvas, and help those in Canvas use more extensive features such as the grading system and modules).

E. **Consider Extensions to the Canvas Environment:** We will evaluate and consider other components of the Canvas system or third-party tools that can help round out the LMS platform such as ePortfolios, plagiarism checking software, and closer integration with Banner class lists and grades, for example.

Implementing Canvas to replace Moodle is an important foundational step toward a more cohesive learning technologies environment. Not only will it help to create a better teaching and learning environment for current classes (on campus, blended, or remote), but it will be a foundation through which other learning technology efforts can be built.

3. **Enable Innovation and Discovery through the Academic Commons**

Perhaps our greatest opportunity, as well as our most significant challenge, will be creating a fertile environment in which new ideas can be gathered from the community,
allowing us to explore them together, test and evaluate the most promising, and assess those that fill a real need, while also providing a mechanism to consider and support their wider use.

Faculty have often remarked that they “don’t know what is possible” when thinking about potential new tools that they might apply to their teaching activities. Similarly, our professional staff are often not aware of particular issues with which faculty are struggling or what kinds of ideas might pique their interest. At the same time, the Hege staff will not likely to be fully connected with the advancements within the various academic disciplines on a national level or within focused professional societies.

Innovation and discovery is a community challenge, and will be best encouraged and supported through a collaborative community process that engages us in regularly exchanging ideas, discussing the things we are trying to accomplish, and thinking together about how we might solve those needs.

As the College rethinks its approaches to blended and online learning within an evolving curriculum, the Academic Commons will also need to be front and center in the development of world-class learning experiences in and out of the classroom, for students and faculty alike.

**Strategic Priorities:**

A. **Define the Support Environment:** The community will need to understand what the support environment for Learning Technologies is designed to accomplish and how students and faculty can gain access to the available services and expertise both remotely and in person.

B. **Develop and Nurture Communities of Interest:** Continue to develop and expand our communities of practice that will help explore interesting new possibilities for applying learning technologies and digital information directly into their academic work.

C. **Engage the Community in Ongoing Dialog:** Create regular and ongoing conversations about the ways in which learning technologies are reshaping teaching, learning and research. Resources such as the New Media Consortium’s Horizon Report, EDUCAUSE’s annual Top 10 IT Issues Facing Higher Education, and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) regular series on “7 Things you should know about...” are examples of resources that can help foster our conversations and considerations.

D. **Leverage the Collaboratory:** The Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory has been developed as a learning laboratory to test new ideas and concepts, and to explore how pedagogies might change through the use of more flexible furnishings and changing technologies (such as tools that allow any student/faculty device to project on the room’s main screen). The Collaboratory will naturally evolve over time and should be fully leveraged as a catalyst for change. The most promising ideas tested here should be further rolled out to the rest of the campus.
E. **Create an Online Community for Sharing:** Create a unifying online digital environment for faculty and staff interested in the conversations that are taking place around the use of learning technologies at Guilford. Encourage members to share their ideas and plans, ask questions, consider options, offer status updates, find others with similar interests, and help people understand the richness of activity surrounding learning technologies within the Academic Commons.

F. **Develop a Catalog of Existing Learning Technologies at Guilford:** Develop a catalog (database or list) of the various software packages and systems in use at the College that briefly describes the purpose of each, along with the status of the current campus agreement, license status, cost, list of key users, and some indication of how people can get access to those tools as needed.

G. **Support Digital Humanities:** As part of the original Andrew W. Mellon supporting Digital Directions for the Arts and Humanities, significant progress has already been made in supporting key digital humanities initiatives that use digital information and learning technologies to enable new forms of research, exploration and knowledge creation. These project are changing the ways that we teach and learn together, and other initiatives should be explored and supported. In addition, the approaches and technologies used for these courses are likely to be useful across the curriculum, supporting the concept of Digital Liberal Arts.

H. **Consider a Makerspace:** The creative capacity of the College will justify the implementation of a defined makerspace facility in the Academic Commons that can help to support other forms of exploration, innovation, and self-directed learning through the use of learning technologies, digital information, and a variety of physical resources and supplies. For example, such a space would help the campus explore 3D modeling and 3D printing and their application to the curriculum. We also intend to explore how the College’s art studios might play a role in expanding the level of resources that can be used as part of a makerspace program.

I. **Explore Specialized Software/Hardware/Information Systems:** New forms of specialized software, hardware, and information systems will continually become available to meet various needs within our academic environment. Working together, we can evaluate those that may be most appropriate for use in the teaching, learning, and research environment and make plans to pilot and eventually adopt them for broader use at the College. Assessment software, speech processing software, presentation systems, programming languages, collaboration environments, digital textbooks, and other specialized tools are likely targets for evaluation, as community needs dictate.

J. **Apply Governance:** We can do anything we believe is best for the College; we cannot do everything that we believe would be useful. As a small institution, we must use the governance body that supports learning technologies to help allocate resources (most importantly time and energy) so that we can work on those initiatives that present the greatest long-term potential to the overall community.

The Academic Commons will be a place to foster innovation and discovery, and the application of learning technologies will often (but not always) be at the center of those advances. Hege Library will provide an avenue for an idea whose time has come, so that
it might move from the idea stage, to a pilot, and ultimately gain momentum toward becoming a real project plan with expected outcomes.
4. **Provide Stewardship for the College’s Learning Spaces:**

As is the case at many of Guilford’s peer institutions, responsibility for the quality and direction of various aspects of its classroom resources is distributed across multiple groups (Academic Affairs, the Registrar, faculty, IT&S, Facilities & Operations, Faculty Development, Disability Resources, and Hege Library, among others). As a consequence, students and faculty currently experience an unevenness in classroom quality across campus; unfortunately, it is fairly evident that our classrooms are not managed in a cohesive manner. There are many examples of good features and support in various classrooms, but there are few in which the various components come together with the consistency and quality that should be expected of such a crucial campus asset during a time when engaging students in active learning is a critical academic focus.

At the same time, increasing numbers of the faculty are exploring new pedagogies and new modes of engaged learning that either augment or replace traditional classroom activities. Some innovation can occur easily within existing facilities, while other attempts are obstructed by existing room designs. In many ways, classroom facilities that were designed for 19th century instructional approaches do not easily adapt to today’s emerging techniques that promise to better engage our students. Learning technologies can be an important tool in such changes, and they must be considered in the context of other environmental factors in the room.

Developing world-class learning experiences will most surely require the College to reimagine its physical classrooms to be more flexible, interactive, accessible, and adaptable to varying teaching modalities. To accomplish these goals across the entire spectrum of classrooms, their overarching design must be considered more intentionally and holistically. Modifications and improvements should be planned in a collaborative fashion, especially including faculty and student input; updates should be communicated broadly with those who are most likely to use those spaces.

**Strategic Priorities:**

A. **Identify Ownership of College Classrooms:** No one currently serves as the overall steward or “owner” of the entire classroom inventory, assessing the need for overall changes and defining the priorities for enhancements that may be required over time (including finding the resources required to achieve them). Ownership for the College’s inventory of classrooms needs to be clarified and solidified, and any future changes should be coordinated. With a single entity considering those assets holistically, various partners can begin to plan more collaboratively for their coordinated improvement on a long-term basis.

B. **Ensure Good Stewardship of Classrooms:** We intend to work collaboratively with other key partners (especially IT&S and Facilities Services) to guide the ongoing evolution of all classroom spaces and to foster a level of quality across the spectrum of classrooms campuswide.

C. **Inventory Current Classroom Resources:** With overarching responsibility for classrooms defined, we will facilitate a cross-functional effort to inventory and assess the quality of classrooms across campus to consider their current
effectiveness, and prioritize the most critical changes required. The inventory should include pictures and should be accessible to the community, especially as renovations are being made to create more active learning spaces.

D. **The Collaboratory as a Space for Exploration:** The new *Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory* has been designed to serve as an interactive learning laboratory, an active incubator of thought, and a testbed for innovation. This new, integrated learning space will allow us to test advances in teaching, learning, and research, by bringing together faculty, students, librarians, technologists, and other academic support professionals. Ideally, this “sandbox” classroom will allow us to create new synergy, as well as catalyze creativity and interdisciplinary activity in a supportive environment. Once tested and evaluated, the most promising ideas and tools will then be moved out to other classrooms across campus.

E. **Develop Classroom Design Principles:** All classrooms are not the same, however, there should be some consistency in their design and ongoing maintenance. As we move to a 21st Century design for the College’s classrooms, we should strive for uniformity in principles that can also support an appropriate level of variety that is required across the curriculum. Similarly, we should strive to involve concepts of universal design to further our accessibility standards in a sustainable and responsible way. We intend to collaborate on the development of principles that defines intended qualities of classroom that are both useful and sustainable, including the quantity and implementation of whiteboards and chalkboards, intended uses of multimedia and other digital resources, and the design of classroom furniture and furnishings, as well as the classroom systems and controls for lighting, heating, and air-conditioning. With such principles in place, making changes to any classroom could become consistent to the overall principles, without enforcing a single limiting standard across all facilities.

F. **Re-Think the Hybrid Classroom:** The existing Hybrid Classroom in Bauman Hall is limited in its usefulness and needs to be rethought from the ground up. With new directions for hybrid and online classes emerging at the College and with new principles guiding classroom design, this facility could be examined for the kinds of functions is should provide and then be reconfigured so that it can be a functional and successful part of the overall classroom inventory.

G. **Consider Other Learning Spaces:** Because learning happens anywhere, we also need to consider other campus learning spaces which regularly support our teaching, learning, and research activities. While our first priority needs to be the most active classrooms, other learning spaces could benefit from the same set of principles, ongoing stewardship, and level of priority for long-term investment.

H. **Moving Beyond Computer Labs:** Many disciplines require the use of special software or dedicated workstations for teaching activities. Those “computer labs” have been a staple of classroom technology for decades and they have served a worthy function. However, as the cost of individual ownership of technology has decreased and the number of different (and often complementary) devices in the hands of students has increased, the College needs to develop a strategy to move beyond computer labs. Hege Library will collaborate with IT&S to determine other possible solutions so that we can better utilize the technologies that students already own in the teaching, learning, and research environment.
While IT&S maintains much of the equipment directly installed within the learning spaces of the campus, Hege Library is responsible for the ways in which the community learns how to utilize those resources effectively. Because we build services and training on top of that foundation of infrastructure, we will assume a leading role in ensuring that the design of learning technologies in the classrooms is consistent with faculty needs and expectations and that the overall level of stewardship provided by the campus continues to improve.

5. **Build a Cohesive Digital Academic Environment:**

Over the past three decades, a growing array of digital resources has advanced the digital environment supporting the academic work of the College. Those resources include portions of the College’s main website, the Library’s integrated library system (OCLC WorldShare), Hege’s own content management system, electronic library resources (journals, databases, LibGuides, etc.), online access to student information in Banner, College administrative records archived in SharePoint, a growing set of resources stored in Google Apps for Education and Google Drive, and individual faculty information and resources on separate, personally managed web pages or other online sites. Currently, the College is migrating to the Canvas learning management system as a replacement for Moodle, the College’s first LMS implemented 10 years prior. This important work provides the foundation upon which we can and must build.

With an increasing array of places for digital objects to be stored and digital services to be offered, we need to develop a cohesive vision for how the College’s digital academic environment should unfold over the next several years. In order to properly enable our digital future, we need to be thoughtful about what we choose to collect and save, as well as the tools we use for those functions now and in the future.

Looking at this in another way, as we have created the nucleus of the physical Academic Commons in Hege Library with the establishment of the Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory, and we now must focus on designing and building a supportive and cohesive digital Academic Commons. This work is critical for the College, as it furthers a holistic environment supporting teaching, learning, and research.

Developing the overarching roadmap for “digital asset management” functions and capabilities that will be required over the next several years likely will be our most challenging priority within this Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies. Such an effort will be encumbered by several critical realities:

- An overarching digital academic environment will consist of a variety of resources with vastly different characteristics; one single repository will not be sufficient across this entire spectrum for the foreseeable future.
- There are many tools available for potential use in creating a digital academic environment; no one tool will likely be able to support the multitude of objects and purposes, as well as facilitate the variety of active projects that the College
will choose to undertake. Some tools will excel at the creation process; others will excel at providing a high-quality presentation environment. The College will likely need to adapt multiple tools to solve a variety of specific needs. Yet, we must work to limit the number of different tools and focus on those that can solve a variety of needs in order to keep this complex environment both affordable and sustainable.

- The market for digital asset management systems is still evolving. New tools will appear and existing tools will fall from favor. We will need to be able to efficiently transfer digital objects and data from one platform to another (exporting our collections and the necessary metadata as we move to tools with greater functionality).
- While some resources will be assembled for one purpose (the creation of a digital site as part of a class, for example), their ultimate storage may be in some other format, if we decide that it is necessary to keep and archive representation of the work for the long-term (a decision that cannot be made lightly).
- Effective metadata must be developed as new objects are added, as it will be key to facilitate finding resources and making them available to the greater community; plans to capture and transform metadata will be necessary to ensure that these investments will survive transitions to the platforms in which they will be managed in the future.
- Some of these systems will run on campus IT infrastructure, and others will run “in the cloud.” As new tools are being evaluated for use at Guilford, we must work closely with our colleagues in IT&S to determine the most appropriate and cost-effective hosting solutions that meet the needs of any given content set and the audience that will use it.

Clearly, our overarching digital academic environment will evolve over time. We have the beginnings of that environment now based on ARTSTOR Shared Shelf, SharePoint, and a small set of pilots within a limited instance of Omeka; this early work shows significant promise. On the other hand, we must combine these initiatives into an overall strategic direction, and we must interleave and integrate them to create a solution that is affordable, scalable, and appropriate for the College.

**Strategic Priorities:**

A. **Engage Governance:** The governance body will need to consider this issue early, as the resource allocation decisions are complex, and competing priorities will need to be considered. Governance will help determine how each potential digital project aligns to the College’s core mission, and to what extent Guilford’s resources can be applied, both in the short-term and in the long-term. When considering a particular digital humanities project such as the current Mellon funded Digital Silk Road initiative, it is clear that most of the intellectual efforts will be furthered by faculty and students working in partnership. We must determine who owns the intellectual property, what will happen to the web presence at the end of the project, and/or what is expected to endure beyond the departure of the originating students and faculty. Such questions must be
considered early in project to ensure that the College understands the long-term intent and the implication for resource allocations in the future.

B. **Further the Digital Repository:** The Library is currently using ARTSTOR Shared Shelf as a repository for a variety of digital objects that it is making available for consumption on and off campus. Designed to manage media files, Shared Shelf is a natural tool to support the storage, cataloging, and sharing of the College’s oral history files and digital images from the art collection. This tool also may have broader applications for other components of the digital academic environment, and we need to confirm this direction to determine what role it will play across a broader range of resources. Specifically, we must answer the question, “Which resources fit well within the Shared Shelf and which resources might need a different kind of repository?”

C. **Deploy a Platform to Support Digital Initiatives:** As energy develops around new curriculum-driven digital initiatives, the College will need to settle on a platform for these and other initiatives that will become more commonplace as a way to blend teaching, learning, and research in the undergraduate curriculum. The current pilot of Omeka must be evaluated, the proper tool for such projects should be determined, and ultimately the College should adopt a solution that will serve it well for at least the next five years. While, in light of the current Mellon grant, the present emphasis is on digital arts and humanities, such projects are likely to have significant potential across the curriculum. Indeed, this is the expectation, as the terminology “Digital Liberal Arts” is being applied.

D. **Clarify the Digital Direction for the College’s Archives:** The recent migration from the Moodle LMS to Canvas forced a conversation about where faculty committee minutes and related documentation that had been stored in Moodle should be housed to ensure College archival integrity, security, and sustainability. The College Archivist, working with the Committee of the Clerk of the Faculty, is furthering a solution that uses both SharePoint and Google Drive as a dual solution to access and archival storage. The appropriateness of SharePoint as the digital archive of the College’s most important digital documents ultimately must be decided, and an appropriate structure and standards for metadata must be developed. Other important archival resources (mostly in print format) need to be considered for digital archiving to improve appropriately their accessibility, and also to improve their probability of surviving a catastrophic campus event.

E. **Develop a Platform for Publishing Guilford Research:** We must support the availability of the intellectual and creative output of the College’s faculty and students in a high-quality repository designed to highlight scholarly communications and to make them publicly available. Student theses, faculty publications, and new forms of publishing on both internal and external levels will need a natural home within the College’s digital academic environment.

F. **Prepare for Specialized Needs for Information Access and Publishing:** Advances in new information resources and emerging needs on the campus will continually drive interest in new possibilities with respect to digital repositories, and the Library needs to be prepared to lead conversations about diverse topics such as eTextbooks or open access textbooks, management of assessment data,
and the curation of research data in a form that both drives sustainability and affordability, and is responsive to the needs of the academic programs.

G. **Consider the Need for a Consistent ePortfolio Strategy:** With the termination of the College’s use of Digication as an ePortfolio and assessment management solution, the institution must assess the need for a consistent campus platform to manage digital portfolios within the larger context of assessment, and also for students and alumni who either need them based on their professional aspirations or want them as an outward manifestation of their academic achievement. The matter, in fact, is a consideration within the context of current curricular reforms. At the moment, students may access ePortfolio functions within Canvas, which also supports assessment management, and/or within Google Apps for Education, where a free version of Digication ePortfolio is available. It will be necessary to monitor the overall requirements and work with members of the College community to assess the need for an overarching strategy for ePortfolios, especially as this supports student learning outcomes assessment.

The development of a cohesive, sustainable, and effective digital academic environment is still at a very early stage, as these kinds of repositories are relatively new in higher education. While Guilford’s physical environment has been evolving for 179 years, our path toward a parallel and supportive digital academic environment is only a few decades old. Capturing digital copies of many historic physical documents will be an ongoing challenge, even while we find effective ways to capture and manage a growing array of born-digital resources. The work will be difficult and time-consuming, but it is essential that we capture existing momentum to move forward aggressively.

6. **Focus on Professional Development:**

Despite our best efforts toward making technology intuitive and simple to use, training and skill development will be increasingly critical for the pervasive use of learning technologies at Guilford. As is often the case at institutions of our size and character, leveraging the full power of any investment in technology will fall short, if the community does not understand what the technology can do, how it might appropriately address their particular needs, and how to use it most effectively.

We use the term “professional development” intentionally within this context, as we want to focus on the ways in which enhancing the level of technology literacy and acumen throughout the campus environment can build upon our own individual professionalism as educators, scholars, and workers in the 21st century. If we can apply appropriate learning technologies in a skillful, proficient, and intentional manner, we surely can improve the student learning environment, while providing educational experiences that could match and exceed those at institutions with far greater resources.

At the same time, if we can impart a greater level of technological skills to students (especially those students who are developing a passion for the use of some aspect of learning technologies), we will most certainly be giving them perspectives, aptitudes, and skills that could help shape their professional aspirations beyond Guilford.
To provide effective stewardship over the entire learning technologies environment, the Library will need to take responsibility for guiding the development of technical skills and expertise across all segments of the community who will rely on that environment. That work requires progress in several areas.

**Strategic Priorities:**

A. **Library Staff Development:** We understand that building capacity for greater use of learning technologies at Guilford begins with us. The staff of the Library, including, but not limited to the Research and Educational Services (RES) team, will need to commit to continually enhancing our own technical skills through whatever means possible, as it will be our own passion for learning that will allow us to help the community face their technological learning-curve with excitement and purpose. We will need to invest in off-campus learning opportunities, as well as build regular time for reflection, exploration, and learning into our professional activities.

B. **Faculty Development:** RES partnership with the Director of Faculty Development and Research and the Director of Creative Endeavors will continue to be a critical success factor. Every interaction that we have with a faculty member will be viewed as an educational opportunity for us to better learn their potential needs for learning technologies and to help move their skills along a deliberate developmental path. We view our own skill development as a partnership opportunity with faculty who may also benefit from those same skills and experiences. We will help increase their awareness, for example, by engaging them in relevant articles and other resources about technologies that they might utilize. In order to increase overall faculty awareness of advances happening at other institutions, we also will look for opportunities to bring external experts to campus to present interesting ideas and approaches to faculty constituencies and to take key faculty with us to national and regional conferences (the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative conference, for example).

C. **Student Development:** In many ways, student skills will be fostered through their coursework and acquired from the faculty and their curricular materials. On the other hand, we will create learning experiences to teach key learning technology skills to appropriate groups of students (e.g. all students required to use a particular technology in their course or students interested in a common skillset such as video production).

D. **Student Learning Technologies Consultants:** We will attract and develop a cadre of promising student assistants that we can retain over 3-4 years and in whom we will build skills in targeted technologies. Such a workforce will be used to leverage the time and energy we can devote to training and supporting the Guilford community. For example, we might also explore summer fellowships to broaden their time in training and preparing materials for the academic year.

E. **Online Learning Initiatives:** We will look for exemplary online educational resources to which we can refer members of our learning community, while we assess the current College relationship with Atomic Learning to determine how
that resource might be further leveraged by the community to develop their skills or look up solutions to problems in an asynchronous learning environment.

F. **Community Discussions about the Use of Technologies:** As interesting new learning technologies become available, we will develop opportunities for community discussions about their possible application to our teaching, learning, and research agendas on campus and explore when and how we might formally consider them for use at Guilford.

The work of the Academic Commons is primarily focused on enabling people to do their best work, and the purpose of the *Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies* is to help them use technologies to reach their goals and aspirations in exciting and productive new ways. This particular strategic direction (to *Focus on Professional Development*) appears last in the list of strategies, not because it is the least important direction or because it was an afterthought. Instead, it appears here for emphasis, because the development of skills within the entire Guilford community will be the foundation upon which all of our other successes will be built. It will be through our skill development and through encouraging others to develop their own appropriate skills that the College’s use of learning technologies will reach our highest aspirations.
The Evolving Environment at Guilford College

It is important to reflect on the changing nature of the Guilford College environment as a whole during this planning period, both for his historical perspective and for what it suggests for the future.

This Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies was conceived as a natural extension of the planning effort completed by the Library in its creation of the Hege Library Strategic Directions, 2014-2017: The Library as “Academic Commons.” That plan was intentionally aligned with the existing campus strategic plans and current senior leadership, and it was considered within the context of the then existing IT strategic plan. In addition, the College’s new President, Jane Fernandes, had just been named to succeed the long-standing and retiring President, J. Kent Chabotar.

Much has changed at Guilford since the inception of the learning technologies planning effort. The new President initiated a wide variety of changes in response to the unique challenges the institution faced and the opportunities it perceived. New senior leadership has been assembled and new administrative structures have been created. Leadership transitions for IT&S have created new opportunities for closer collaboration. New planning efforts are underway to shape the College’s support of the evolution of new academic ideas and directions, as well as to advance other important priorities. Preparations are being made for a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the upcoming SACS reaffirmation process, a new general education curriculum is under development, and innovations in hybrid and online learning are being encouraged. The current grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Digital Directions for the Arts and Humanities, is furthering digital pedagogy and scholarship, and a presidential Mellon grant is supporting the most vital academic priorities.

This indeed is an exhilarating time of transformation at Guilford College.

At the same time, important changes within Hege Library provide an important foundation for the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies. Organizational changes have taken place within the staff, notably with the re-envisioning of the Research and Educational Services team, will provide much of the staffing synergy to advance this plan. The new Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory on Hege’s second level provides a space for exploring ideas and considering new possibilities. Strengthening relationships with IT&S provides energy for our growing collaborative activities within the Library.

The shifting landscape represented by all of these changes has had an impact on this planning effort. We remained diligent during the process to ensure the final plan’s alignment and relevancy, despite both current and yet to come unfolding changes. We recognized that priorities may shift within the plan’s timeframe, resource levels may shrink or grow, and key players may change. However, the underlying premise of this plan had to endure. Learning technologies increasingly will fuel the continued enhancement of the College and will be absolutely critical to its ongoing success. Most
importantly, the strategic directions described herein will help to shape a robust and relevant learning technologies ecosystem that can support the advancement of a changing campus environment.

Indeed, the changing environment has served to propel some initiatives ahead of the completion of the plan; the current focus on increasing hybrid/online learning has served as a reminder of the critical nature of learning technologies to the long-standing success of the College and underscored the problems associated with Guilford’s reliance on Moodle as its learning management system. Thus, this planning effort pushed forward a pilot of a possible successor, even in advance of the completion of the plan; as the development of this plan drew to completion, the implementation of the Canvas learning management solution is about to be launched.

Ultimately, the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies must continue to respond to changing campus conditions and new College initiatives, as well as take advantages to advances in technologies that can fuel new enhancements in the teaching, learning, and research environment.

Summary

The campus efforts required to accomplish the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies are substantial; these aggressive plans would be a challenge for a much larger organization with significantly greater resources. However, we firmly believe that our commitment to working in authentic collaboration with our campus colleagues will create energy, encourage our partners, and drive our success. With our joint commitments to each other, there is so much that we can achieve, especially when the goals are aspirational and the stakes are high.

Success begets success. An evolving record of well-defined projects with excellent outcomes will provide additional support from those we serve. We already have exceeded expectations with the launch of the Canvas learning management system, the establishment of the Teaching, Learning, and Research Collaboratory, and the reorganization of Hege Library. Most significantly, the construction of the Collaboratory made it possible to establish the offices of the Directors of Faculty Development, Research and Creative Endeavors, and the Honors Program within the Library, which in essence has made the vision of Hege Library as the Academic Commons a reality. Momentum and energy will only build from this point, as we engage more of the Guilford community in a new collaborative process.

Success will come in many forms. Increasingly, Guilford’s learning spaces will become inspirational environments for engaged student learning. Faculty will understand how learning technologies can be applied to addressing challenges in the teaching/learning process and will have support in considering how to use these technologies successfully. We will have regular opportunities to come together to share ideas, approaches, and solutions. Faculty and students will know precisely where to turn for expert assistance. We will advance the culture of authentic collaboration for the benefit of all. Ultimately,
people will understand the potential inherent in the learning technologies ecosystem and will know what they need to learn. Communication will further understanding and foster a culture of transparency. The community will trust that the ecosystem is functioning as it should at Guilford.

We believe in our ability to succeed together, and we intend to capture fully the opportunities that are ahead of us.
Appendix A – Methodology
Process and Community Engagement

The development of a comprehensive technology plan to support the vision for the Library as Academic Commons was identified as an essential priority in the action plan that was created following the completion of the strategic plan *Hege Library Strategic Directions, 2014-1017: The Library as Academic Commons* in the spring of 2014. The importance of engaging in this technology planning was reinforced by the award to the College of $100,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to further *Digital Directions for the Arts and Humanities* as a way to catalyze the liberal arts and humanities experience at Guilford within the interactive learning laboratory environment envisioned for the Academic Commons.

Following the award of the Mellon grant, the decision was made to develop a *Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies* and to apply for a State of North Carolina Library Services and Technology (LSTA) EZ Planning Grant to fund this planning initiative. Further, it was decided to retain Gene Spencer Consulting to facilitate a community-based process to consider and develop the plan. Eugene Spencer currently is CIO at Ursinus College and a national thought-leader focused on higher education library and IT organizations and collaboration.

As the Library was committed to developing the plan with Gene Spencer regardless of grant funding, the Library funded Gene Spencer’s initial visit on April 24, 2015 to meet with the Librarians’ Council and other key stakeholders. The goal was to make an assessment of the opportunity to develop collaborative capacity between the Hege Library and Information Technology & Services, as this was a critical success factor for the planning. Notice of the award of the grant was received on May 19, 2015.

The learning technologies planning initiative unfolded as a natural extension of the original planning, and as with *Strategic Directions*, adopted an appreciative inquiry, strengths-based approach, observing a similar methodology. The active planning initiative unfolded over the course of a full academic year (AY 2015/16). A significant factor and particular challenge to the work was the pace and scope of change at the College throughout the planning period, notably for the President’s Senior Leadership team, which was in ongoing development; for the Information Technology and Services (IT&S) leadership, with the departure of the CIO and rethinking of that position; and for the Library’s Research and Educational Services team, which had experienced total turnover by January 2016. Critical to the success of the planning, however, was ongoing involvement of both Library and IT&S stakeholders, despite reduced presence in key Library and IT&S positions. Reduced ranks within Hege’s Librarians’ Council were supported by key partners in the Library’s Academic Commons vision, i.e. the Directors of Faculty Development, Research and Creative Endeavors, the Honors Program, and Institutional Research and Effectiveness. The interim Director of IT&S also provided important perspective and input. A new Director of IT&S was hired in late spring 2016, and this individual was able to contribute to the final phase of the planning.
In addition, the process supported ongoing Guilford community engagement, particularly with key faculty stakeholders and others who had remained involved with the implementation of the Library strategic plan. The following groups and constituencies were identified to ensure broad-based community involvement:

**Mellon Grant Advisory Committee**

Kami Rowan, Chair  
Suzanne Bartels, PI (FDC)  
Kathy Adams (FDC – Director)  
Gwen Erickson  
Stephanie Hargrave  
Daniel Diaz  
David Hammond  
Eric Mortensen (FDC)  
Erin Dell  
Mark (Fred) Dixon  
Heather Hans  
Heather Hayton  
James Hood  
Julie Burke (FDC)  
Kathryn Shields  
Krista Craven (FDC)  
Marc Williams  
Maria Rosales (FDC)  
Mark Justad  
Melanie Lee-Brown  
Timothy Kircher

**NOTE:** FDC = members of the Faculty Development Committee

**Faculty Clerk’s Committee**

Dave Dobson, Clerk  
Gwen Erickson, Recording Clerk  
Sherry (Hollyce) Giles  
Lisa McCleod  
Kathryn Shields  
Steve Shapiro  
Sarah Estow  
Beth Rushing (ex officio)

**Academic Division Chairs**

Wendy Looker (Arts)  
Betty Kane (Business)
Tim Kircher (Humanities)
Karen Tinsley (Interdisciplinary Studies)
Steve Shapiro (Natural Sciences)
David Hildreth (Social Sciences)

Academic Commons Planning Committee (includes Facilities)

Barbara Boyette
Brett Hacker
Brian Wenger
Elizabeth Wade
Gwendolyn Erickson
Heather Hayton
Daniel Diaz
Kathrynn Adams
Matthew Oberg
Melanie Lee-Brown
Melissa Daniel Frink
Molly Anne Marcotte
Norma Middleton
Theresa Hammond
Vance Ricks

Sciences and Pre-Professional Programs (not represented elsewhere)

Gail Webster (Chemistry)
Richard Schilhavy (CTIS)
Holly Peterson (Environmental Studies)
Anne Glenn (Health Sciences)
Barbara Lawrence (Justice and Policy Studies)
Lavon Williams (Sport Studies)

Other Programs (not represented elsewhere)

Hiroko Hirakawa (International Studies)
Naadiya Hasan (Sociology/Anthropology)
Nancy Daukas (Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)

Experiential Learning: Study Abroad, Principled Problem Solving, Multicultural Education, Career Development Services (internships), Bonner Center, Friends Center (Undergraduate Research as a bridge from Academic Commons)

Daniel Diaz (Study Abroad)
Mark Justad (PPS)
Jenny Knight (PPS)
Irving Zavaleta Jimenez (ME)
Alan Mueller (Career)  
Megan Walters (Career – Internships)  
James Shields (Bonner)  
Andrew Young (Bonner)  
Wess Daniels (Friends Center)  
Melanie Lee-Brown (URCE)  

**Liberal Arts General Education Revision (LAGER) Committee**  

Kyle Dell, Chair  
Melanie Lee-Brown  
Suzanne Bartels  
Drew Hays  
Lavon Williams  
Damon Akins  
Stephanie Hargrave  
Jennie Knight  
Caleb Anderson (traditional student representative)  
Dale Koch (continuing education student representative)  

**SACS-COC Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning Committee**  

Steve Shapiro, Chair  
Eva Lawrence  
Stephanie Hargrave  
Ken Gilmore  
Marc Williams  
Melissa Daniel Frink  
Suzanne Bartels  
Dave Limburg  
Molly Ann Marcotte  

**IT&S staff**  

Roy “Chuck” Curry (Director of IT&S – hired June 1, 2016)  
Mark Harris (Interim Director of IT&S through May 2016)  
Terri Johnson  
Teresa Sanford  
Joan Griffith  
Ron Hinton  
Jess Greenstein  
Merritt Johnson  
Brian Evans  
Ian Hulsey
Student Affairs

Todd Clark
Steve Moran
Emily Lott

Alumni Affairs

Karrie Manson
Miriam Biber

Student Senate (traditional)
Molly Anne Marcotte

Student Government Association (SGA) (continuing education)
Matthew Oberg

Planning Activities

A synopsis of activities supportive of and aligned with the planning effort follows:

1. Gene Spencer made his first visit to campus within the context of the grant on July 27, 2015 to meet with new senior leadership for Academic Affairs (to whom the Library reports) and Student Affairs (to whom IT&S temporarily reported), as well as the interim leadership of IT&S to determine the status of the strategic plan for Information Technology and its ongoing impact on potential collaboration between the Library and IT&S on issues surrounding learning technologies.

2. Angel David Nieves & Janet Thomas Simons (Co-Directors of Hamilton College’s Digital Humanities Initiative (DHi) visited campus on November 1-3, 2015, as consultants to the Mellon grant initiative, to assess the College’s capacity and potential for supporting an active Digital Humanities program at Guilford.

3. Gene Spencer visited campus on February 7-8, 2016 to conduct three workshops for members of the Guilford College community to discuss several issues pertaining to the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies including the following: what has changed at the College over the past year and what should the term “learning technologies” mean at this institution? In addition, members of the community participated in an exercise to determine elements of a highly successful learning technologies environment and the principles required to create it. Gene also interviewed continuing education students and attended a meeting of the Student Senate.

4. Heather Hayton, Professor of English and Director of the Honors Program, Melanie Lee-Brown, Associate Professor of Biology and Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors, and Suzanne Bartels, Director of Hege Library and Learning Technologies visited Occidental College on
February 29-March 1, 2016 to experience their Academic Commons in the Mary Norton Clapp Library and the Center for the Digital Liberal Arts.

5. Gene Spencer visited campus for the fourth time on April 21, 2016 to meet with the planning team to review an initial draft of the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies and provide feedback. In addition, meetings were held with Beth Rushing, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean, and Leonard Sippel, new Vice President for Administration and Finance (to whom IT&S reports), as well as with the Canvas LMS and Hybrid pilot faculty. The Mellon Grant Steering Committee also made a presentation to President Jane K. Fernandes about the progress of the Mellon grant initiative and the significance of the learning technologies planning to future “Digital Directions.” An added bonus for this site visit was the presence of Marsha Kay Schnirring of Occidental College, who intentionally coordinated a visit to Guilford College (as a result of the Guilford contingent’s successful February trip to Occidental) with Gene Spencer’s visit, to experience the Library’s environment first-hand and to provide additional perspective and consultation (Marsha’s visit was fully supported by Occidental College.)

6. Gene Spencer visited campus on June 26, 2016 to review the draft of the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies and gather feedback. The new Director of IT&S had started his appointment by then and was able to join in these final conversations and provide input into the final draft of the plan.

Post LSTA-Grant

A follow-up visit for Maureen Sullivan (consultant to Strategic Directions, 2014-17: The Library as “Academic Commons”) and Gene Spencer is being planned for October 2016 in order to meet with new staff from Hege Library and to reflect with the Library staff as a whole on the progression of change and accomplishments resulting from the strategic planning processes relating to the Academic Commons vision. This also will be a time for the Guilford Community as a whole be introduced to the final draft of the plan and to gather any additional feedback for the finalization of the plan. Meetings also will be coordinated with members of the Mellon Grant Steering Committee, the Librarians’ Council, and with IT&S. Finally, next steps for moving into the implementation phase of the Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies will be identified.
Suzanne Bartels, Director of Library Services and Learning Technologies  
Hege Library  
Guilford College  
5800 West Friendly Avenue  
Greensboro, NC 27410  

Dear Suzanne,  

I want to take a moment to reflect upon the work that you and your organization have done to create your Strategic Plan for Learning Technologies, which will set new directions and begin developing a cohesive environment capable of nurturing and supporting the use of learning technologies on the Guilford campus.  

Some at Guilford may look upon your plans as foolhardy, because this strategic plan is aggressive, and you are by all measures a modest organization with limited resources. On the other hand, such a plan makes visible the College’s commitment to a 21st Century Liberal Arts learning experience for your students, and the greater success of the institution depends on your identifying and accomplishing many of the significant goals of this plan.  

When expressing your desires to build a cohesive and robust learning technologies environment, some within the focus groups claimed “if I see it, I will believe it.” I understand those sentiments as a normal human reaction, especially with the level of change you have experienced at Guilford over the past 2 years. On the other hand, it is clear that you personally look forward to such challenges with a passion for dramatically improving the institution. In that context, you have approached this ambitious work in a way that is optimistic if even a bit naïve; as we have discussed, you seem to see the world in a different context expressed as “if I believe it, I will see it.” That difference in mindset and approach is truly transformational; what you and your many partners on campus can accomplish together will be significant. Your joint ability to fully leverage all of your resources are likely to surprise even you and your staff.  

You have already found a way inside the Academic Commons framework to build critical capacity and gain traction, which has thus been turned into a successful grant request. The
results of that grant have helped you develop progress, momentum, and outcomes that have been leveraged into a second grant to fund this planning process. With your emerging vision, you attracted donor funding for a major change on the second floor of Hege Library, which in turn provides a space to explore ideas with learning technologies and move them outward to the rest of the campus. You have developed an upward cycle of success that will move the campus forward, even though you are far from done.

You and your staff are good campus citizens and professionals with a solid work ethic. You have many positive members of the community who are willing to trust your motives and support your vision. It is obvious that your goals are their goals; you selflessly strive to do what is right and appropriate for the community.

With this plan, we now have a framework for progress and a vision for learning technologies that the community can accomplish by working together. As your new staff colleagues join you this summer and as you launch the new LMS system for the fall, I can already sense the early success that lays before you. You will undoubtedly continue to build capacity and choose to prioritize those projects that can impact multiple goals at the same time. Progress will build again and again!

The future learning technologies environment at Guilford will be dramatically different than what has come before. I look forward to hearing of those successes which you will share with this community. Your efforts will help enhance the important work that is happening at the College and will clearly benefit its students.

I am grateful for having had an opportunity to participate in this collaborative planning effort, and look forward to hearing about all of the progress you will have made over the next several years.

Regards and best wishes,

Eugene L. Spencer, Principal
Gene Spencer Consulting – Serving the Higher Education IT and Library Communities