

LITS Commitments to Mount Holyoke College 2016-2021

In 1996, Mount Holyoke College was one of the first to recognize the value of merging library, information, and technology services into a single organizational unit now known as LITS. Since then, LITS has drawn on the expertise, creativity, vision, and dedication of this blended team of library and technology professionals to guide the dramatic changes in information and technology in order to advance the mission of the College. With the twenty-fifth anniversary as a merged organization on the horizon, LITS is excited to continue playing this leadership role for the College. LITS will do so by delivering on key commitments made during the strategic planning process, and by continuing to adapt and develop as an organization and as individuals.

In September 2016 Mount Holyoke College's Board of Trustees approved The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2021. The plan was developed with considerable input from across the campus, and LITS contributed substantially to its development. LITS Staff members served on the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), and on several of the working groups that contributed the material from which the plan was developed. In addition, especially during the summer and fall of 2016 as the College developed the more detailed implementation plan, the Administrative Technology Steering Committee (ATSC), the LITS Advisory Committee, the LITS Leadership Team, areas within LITS, and various committees and working groups helped to articulate and describe the actions the College would need to commit to in order to accomplish The Plan for 2021. The Plan is described in the 2017 NEASC reaccreditation self-study as follows:

The Plan for 2021 is a reflection of Mount Holyoke: it is dense, complex, and interconnected. It contains dozens of actionable items, touching every aspect of the College's operations. Nearly every item in some ways addresses not simply one discipline or population but the entirety of the College experience: our mission, our academic strength, our campus community, our global presence, our effectiveness as an institution. It is a plan for this complicated, interconnected place that does some of the world's hardest, most important work."

The work of LITS is at the heart of this hard, important, and interconnected work because, at its core, LITS connects the people, technology, and data of the College to further its mission. Nearly every service we provide, nearly every resource we deliver enables multiple disciplines, furthers the work of multiple areas of the administration, or serves multiple users at different moments. At the same time, LITS is dependent on every area of the college to successfully serve our mission:

LITS facilitates the creative use of information and technology for the Mount Holyoke College community. It supports the educational priorities of the College by providing instruction, materials, staff expertise, and equipment to sustain learning, teaching, research, and the College's administrative functions.

In serving this mission LITS has a successful record of balancing three key imperatives that have helped it succeed in times of dramatic change: LITS is committed to being responsive to the community; to being well aligned with the changing needs of the College; and to striving for excellence through being informed by and engaged with the best that is happening beyond the campus. Balancing these three imperatives has been key to our success in serving and leading the campus through change. Continuing to develop our abilities in these three areas will allow us to most effectively advance the mission of the college and contribute to The Plan for 2021.

Being responsive to the community:

LITS has a history of enlisting the considerable creativity, expertise, and insight that the faculty, students, and staff of Mount Holyoke bring to their work. This was expressed early in LITS' vision of "techno pedagogy" that tapped teams of faculty and students, with library and technology professionals to address curricular and pedagogical challenges as teams. LITS was early to adopt ethnographic methods of understanding faculty and students' use of the content, tools, and spaces of the library from their perspective. This effort is still reflected in the Ask LITS board, the use of flipcharts and whiteboards strategically placed, and the use of focus groups to collect authentic feedback to inform LITS' decisions: from furniture choices, to the placement of printers across campus. The commitment to engage the community to help us continually improve is also reflected in the growing ways in which LITS solicits feedback following services we provide, from interlibrary loan to the help desk. As we work with the College to advance The Plan for 2021, we will continue to build upon, develop, and rely on this responsive, user-centered approach.

Building on this user-centered approach, being responsive to the community, will mean continuing to develop the College's library, information, and technology environment to foster faculty innovation in teaching and learning, to foster student research and entrepreneurial engagement, and to encourage staff creativity, efficiency, and learning. We will do this by continuing to use multiple methods of connecting with and understanding the insights of the Mount Holyoke community through our regular MISO surveys, small-scale ethnographic studies, feedback forms for our service points, robust liaison relationships with faculty and students, collaborating and consulting with administrative departments, and through active engagement and participation in committees and other governance groups across campus. In short, we will continue to live up to the view expressed in a comment left by a patron on the Ask LITS board: LITS is the most responsive department on campus.

To be aligned with the College:

Over the past twenty years LITS has been well aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the campus thanks to effective governance structures, active involvement of LITS staff in college wide committees and task forces, and especially LITS' engagement with and contributions to the strategic planning process. It is also well aligned thanks to the deep commitment of the staff who choose to join a team in service of a mission-driven institution.

Being aligned with the College means prioritizing those initiatives that best advance the mission and that best help to distinguish the College in a competitive environment.

LITS chose to develop this five year plan shortly after the College completed implementation of The Plan for 2021 as a way to ensure its plan is aligned. Yet, the College and LITS are operating in a time of dramatic change that will require adjustments to the specific commitments of the plan. As it has in the past, LITS will continue to rely on close, collaborative work with departments and committees, to set and commit to priorities for the institution as a whole and to make adjustments to the plan as outlined. The primary spaces for this work is through the LITS Advisory Committee and the Administrative Technology Steering Committee, but also through the many projects and working groups that guide individual efforts. Throughout, the guiding question will be how best to advance the mission and to distinguish the College.

To strive for excellence:

As LITS continues to be responsive to the community and to align its efforts with the College's strategic directions, LITS will also continue to engage with the best that is happening beyond the campus, the sector, and our industry. The College and LITS have a long and successful history of tapping and contributing to initiatives with our Five College partners and peer institutions in the Oberlin Group, CLAC, and CLIR. Striving for excellence also means continuing to engage more broadly with the higher education sector through Educause, ALA, and the AAC&U, and with our vendors.

Striving for excellence means choosing to lead in those areas that are responsive to the community, best aligned with the mission of the College, and that distinguish it from its peers. Thus, for example, the College's mission includes the call "...to draw students from all backgrounds into an exceptionally diverse and inclusive learning community...", and The Plan identifies that "our strengths lie in the global diversity of our students...". LITS is a leader among our peers in the efforts to improve the accessibility of resources, tools, services, and spaces and that work will continue. We will now additionally commit to developing excellence in supporting diversity of race-ethnicity-nationality, gender-sexuality, and socio-economic background through training of our staff, recruiting and hiring, programming, and collaborations with partners at the College and beyond.

Striving for excellence also means learning from and adopting practices developed by others, or selecting less resource-intensive approaches for areas that are important but may not be as closely aligned with the mission or distinguish the College. This includes, for example, the collaboration with Amherst, Vassar, and Williams Colleges to tap a commercial service to meet shared and growing information security demands.

The plan

"I have always found that plans are useless but planning is indispensable."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Responsiveness, alignment, and excellence will guide our work going forward. LITS, like many organizations navigating the dramatic pace of technological change, has increasingly been embracing an Agile approach to projects, and managing change. Core to this approach is the concept of iterative development: as much as possible, we will break the work into smaller phases that allow for frequent review and feedback, and assess what the appropriate next iterations should be. This will allow us to adjust the work to ensure we are indeed delivering the value needed by the institution without over-investing in any one area. It also allows for greater responsiveness to feedback from the community, and allows us to adjust projects to better align phases with changing needs of the College and with developments elsewhere.

The College's strategic planning process and planning work within LITS have identified many broad commitments that LITS has made for the next five years. We have organized these below according to the major services and areas of leadership that LITS provides to the College.

Going forward, the framework below will serve as the scaffolding for our annual plans and commitments. The annual review will include more specific projects and goals to advance elements of the plan in each fiscal year. At the same time, recognizing that we live in a time of dramatic change, we will update and clarify areas where changes in the conditions require us to alter course. The framework and commitments below represent a snapshot based on the considerable work of many across the College including the CPC, SPC, ATSC, LITS Advisory Committee, LITS staff and leadership as of FY17.

LITS looks forward to completing the first quarter-century of leadership by continuing to build on LITS responsiveness, alignment, and continual striving for excellence. It also is especially eager to contribute its substantial share to The Plan for 2021 meeting the objectives to “sustain and renew the academic program, the College, and its campus environment, while further strengthening opportunities for personal and professional growth for students, faculty, and staff.”

Over the course of the five years covered by the plan LITS will publish annual commitments for each coming fiscal year, and accomplishments at the conclusion of each year:

- [LITS FY17 Accomplishments](#)
- [LITS FY18 Commitments](#)

LITS 2016-2017 Commitments:

- Administrative Applications: Manage and support a modern administrative application environment that provides an excellent user experience for all constituencies of the college, promotes efficient business processes, and facilitate effective and appropriate data sharing within and across divisions.
 - Partner with offices to review business processes and perform needs analyses.
 - Work with administrative offices and key stakeholders to identify and procure solutions to address technology needs not met by existing platforms.

- When commercial solutions are not practical, or the need is highly specialized and aligns with the mission of the college, work with offices to develop custom solutions.
 - Through a process of continuous and incremental improvement, update and modernize solutions the College already owns.
 - Lead and coordinate the implementation and rollout of on-premise and SaaS platforms and services.
 - Provide the Identity and access management foundation for ensuring the security of mission critical applications and services.
 - Develop, build and maintain centralized repositories of data managed by the college's core administrative systems.
 - Plan for the future: Research and determine best path to modernize core systems of record for the college.
- Computer and Information Security: Improve and extend information security and privacy protections for the community through a systematic and risk-based information security program. Develop a culture of shared responsibility for information security through awareness training and enhanced support for user facing tools and technology.
 - Implement roadmap set forth by the managed Information Security Officer program.
 - Invest in next generation identity management tools and processes to help ensure the security of the community, ease of access, more personalized experience, and efficient management for all Mount Holyoke community members.
- Consulting and Training: Coordinate and provide training to develop the skills of faculty and staff to make effective use of information and technology. Provide expert consultation to individuals and departments to identify ways information and technology can best be tapped to advance teaching, learning, research, and administrative goals.
 - Contribute to college-wide on-boarding for new- and continual development of existing staff and faculty.
 - Coordinate and manage enterprise-scale IT projects and initiatives.
 - Partner with PaGE to develop services targeted to graduate programs.
 - Extend digital asset management (DAM) support across the College.
 - Continue to improve accessibility of the electronic information technology environment for all community members.
- Equipment Lending: Provide broad and equitable loan access to state-of-the-art technology equipment for computing, storage, audiovisual and video applications and provide robust training and support in its use.
 - Review circulation and laptop pool distributions and configurations in light of coming virtualization technology to determine how best to allow more flexible access to more software to more students for longer periods of time.

- Infrastructure Services: Provide and support the network, processing, and storage environments required to meet the growing IT needs of the college.
 - Infrastructure selection and deployment is framed within the context of the most effective and efficient use of college resources. This work is done through a planful and continuous evolution of equipment and technology.

- Instructional Technology: Provide, enhance, and support the technologies necessary for effective instruction across campus. See “Pedagogy” for additional information on pedagogical uses of technologies. See “Teaching and Meeting Spaces” for information about technologies in classrooms.
 - Through a process of continuous and incremental improvement, develop the college’s digital learning environment (i.e. Moodle and potential successors).
 - Continue to improve accessibility of the electronic information technology environment and support for student accommodations in collaboration with AccessAbility Services.
 - In collaboration with appropriate departments, programs, and initiatives, develop the ability to support quantitative reasoning and data science across the curriculum.
 - Provide sound design and visual media production support; expand curricular support for Visual Culture and technology and the arts.
 - Support faculty curricular use of the makerspace.

- Library and Archival Collections: Develop the College’s distinctive and responsive collections and provide services and technological infrastructure to ensure access to materials that fit teaching and student research needs and to archival collections that document the history and life of the College.
 - Through a process of continuous improvement, ensure that we are providing access to collections that fit current teaching and student research needs.
 - Significantly improve discoverability of collections.
 - Develop the digital library environment and workflow to house MHC’s unique digitized and born-digital collections.
 - In conjunction with the Museum, develop the "Campus as Collection" concept and pursue major grant/gift opportunities for funding.

- LITS Facilities and Spaces: Position LITS and the LITS Complex as a rich, accessible, inclusive, academically focused, fun, and engaging hub for community activity, complementing the new Community Center.
 - Take leadership on developing programming related to information and technology issues; Develop programming that resonates with college-wide topics and themes.
 - Continue to improve LITS building accessibility, functionality, and aesthetics.

- Collaborate with College's facility planning efforts to make best use of Dwight Hall. Align LITS activities with college plans and priorities for teaching, learning and advising in Dwight Hall.
 - Develop a plan to renovate and renew LITS complex for inclusion in future strategic plans and fund-raising initiatives.
- Pedagogy: Collaborate with faculty to identify tools and methods for course instruction, design research assignments and projects, and develop new and innovative curricula. Teach workshops and in-class sessions on library research and curricular technology.
 - Expand curricular support for technology and the arts by providing technical and educational coordination for the 4-year Sherman Fairchild Foundation Technology and the Arts project (FY18-21)
 - Support and provide expertise in pedagogical innovation and high-impact teaching practices, such as object- and team-based learning and eportfolios, in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Initiative (TLI). Develop staff to more effectively partner in these areas.
 - Provide leadership in information literacy and technology literacy instruction.
- Research: Teach students how to be effective researchers and ethical participants in scholarly conversations. Support faculty engaged in scholarship production by providing access to research infrastructure and support including collections, consultations, and technologies.
 - Develop and publicize a LITS Data Services Program which provides faculty and student data support.
 - Enhance support for high performance computing through the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center and other cloud and collaborative solutions.
- Teaching and Meeting Spaces: Provide and maintain flexible, sound, and well-designed technologies for teaching and meeting spaces with an emphasis on user interface and reliability. Maintain state-of-the-art standards and consistency across spaces to support ease-of-use and broad functionality.
 - Continue collaboration with Dean of Faculty and other stakeholders to support the evolution of Makerspace from its current location to its more permanent space.
 - Explore new models for academic computing labs and software based on usage metrics, including use of VCL and Application Virtualization.
 - Continue to evolve the classroom technology environment to best align with faculty pedagogical approaches.
 - Continue to evolve the non-classroom AV environment, including digital signage.
- Technical Support: Provide a broad range of flexible, responsive, proactive, and accurate support options designed to educate users about technology as well as solve a

wide variety of hardware and software problems. Track incidents, problems and changes and document solutions.

- Improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of direct user support.
 - Explore new models for securing desktop and laptop computers.
 - Continue to build out and standardize procedures with desktop management tools.
 - Improve the user experience and efficiency of the college print environment, informed by usage metrics and user feedback.
 - Track printer usage across campus to allow for data driven print management of the printer fleet, chargebacks and inventory distribution.
- Video and Videoconferencing Services: Offer a variety of video services in support of academic endeavors including videography, basic editing, video streaming and videoconferencing services to enhance teaching and learning.
 - Provide support and training in use of video technologies for academic and administrative needs
 - Provide video recording, streaming and editing services in support of a variety of teaching and learning applications
- Websites and Blogs: Provide and support locally hosted-web and blog services through a combination of open source and commercial products, while looking to cloud-based solutions and platforms for more powerful and flexible options.
 - Extend the use of My.MtHolyoke as the college's primary means of internal communication and sharing.
 - Expand use of WordPress as an online publishing platform for individuals and explore additional venues for digital publishing by individuals.
- LITS' Organizational Effectiveness: Recruit a diverse staff and develop an effective, inclusive organization to meet the evolving needs of the college within a changing information and technology environment.
 - In collaboration with the College, improve LITS' ability to recruit a diverse staff, and foster an inclusive work environment.
 - Create internship, post-bac, and other opportunities to recruit Mount Holyoke graduates into information and technology professions.
 - Develop scaffolded professional development for staff and managers, integrated with regular performance reviews, that draws on industry best practices.
 - Develop and implement a LITS customer service strategy that includes the prioritization of the LITS web site as service point.
 - Create a cohesive communications strategy for LITS that addresses both internal and external audiences.
 - Position ASC's goals and resource needs more strategically within the College

- Continue to improve procurement workflows and approaches for addressing compliance issues such as information security, protection of sensitive data and ensuring accessibility of all systems where there is an end-user interface.
- Increase capacity for scanning by expanding into nights/weekends and explore opportunities and benefits to centralizing scanning operations and expand on-demand scanning services.

