

Computer Related Equipment Replacement Plan At the North Orange County Community College District (NOCCCD)

History

Purchase and replacement of Computer Related Equipment across the district has been inconsistent over the years. Some campuses have funded replacements through one-time dollars, some have used on-going resources and some have relied on department monies or grant dollars to update the Computer Related Equipment on campus. Regardless of the funding challenges the result has been that across the district a significant number of PC's, printers and other equipment are old and in need of replacement. A survey done in early 2010 noted that the average age of the PC's across the district is 4+ years old.

In May 2010, the Technology Coordinating Council (TCC), a subcommittee of the District Planning Council, was formed to examine technology in the district and make recommendations regarding the planning and policy issues to the District Planning Council. The TCC identified issues that it felt needed addressed in October 2010 and prioritized those issues. The second highest priority identified by the TCC was PC & Printer Replacement Planning. Hence, the need for this document which addresses this important issue.

Research

NOCCCD is not alone in grappling with this issue. Educause, in the May/June 2010 edition of Educause Review indicated that Funding IT is the top issue for schools and colleges. In the Campus Computing Survey, done annually with input from all segments of higher education, the second ranked IT Issue was Financing IT. Both of these studies indicate the limiting of resources for technology.

In addition, the latest Gartner Research on PC replacement cycles indicates that 5 years should be the normal replacement cycle for desktop PC's and that notebooks should be 3-4 years; a mere goal for many colleges. At NOCCCD, we have an average of 4+ year old computers meaning that at least half are at or past their useful life as established by Gartner.

Why We Need to Upgrade

A significant factor is that the system requirements for effective PC's and printers are increasing and NOCCCD may not be keeping up. Many of our computers are unable to run the latest software versions of the operating system and other applications required to complete our work. Another reason to upgrade is the student need to be trained/taught in the latest available software/hardware to be competitive when they complete their studies. Finally, our accreditation standards ask us to continually improve and show that we have the appropriate resources to carry out our mission. All three institutions have identified a need for technology planning in their respective Accreditation Self Studies. For SCE it is identified in Standard VIII – Learning Resources. For Cypress and Fullerton, the need is identified in Standard III.C.

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Options for Addressing the Issue

Necessity is the mother of invention they say and our campuses have found some technologies which may extend the life of our outdated equipment. These include:

- Virtualization – a technology which allows you to share computing resources in such a way that the user facing equipment does not need to be updated quite as frequently. Costs may be more or less than purchasing new equipment over time. Some applications cannot run well in this environment.
- Memory upgrades and chipset upgrades – if this type of upgrade can be done you may get 1-2 more years of useful life. Not all PC's or printers are upgradeable.
- Cascade Plans – move computers around to make most efficient use of the resources. Much of the benefit of doing this may be done during the first four years.
- Web-based access/Cloud Computing – using remote computing resources to get work done. This is quite new and has security and operational concerns.

Plans Today

Surveys of the four institutions at NOCCCD indicate that there are various types of plans in place. Some are written; others are not. Some are very detailed and tied to budget and others are not.

Need for A Plan

Clearly there is a need for planning, just as there are plans for facilities improvements. Planning needs to help everyone district wide manage costs while at the same time preserve campus preferences. A district replacement plan should set a minimum standard for computer related equipment replacement, and give the local campus the choice to replace more frequently or with better quality equipment. Each campus should then develop a local plan which meets or exceeds the district wide recommendation, determines cascading structures, determines campus equipment replacement standards and replacement schedules. This is the same model used for telecommunications today.

Need for Continual Evaluation and Update of the Plan

In addition to the need for planning, periodic evaluation of the plan and updates for emerging technologies is required.

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District Replacement Plan

The Technology Coordinating Council recommends the following minimum replacement schedule for assets purchased and maintained by the District:

Equipment	Minimum Replacement Cycle
Lab Desktop Computers	3 Years
Faculty/Staff Desktop/ Laptop Computers	5 Years with an interim evaluation
Servers/Blades/Upgrades	4 Years
Mouse/Keyboard	As Needed
Video Card with Dual Monitor Capability	8 Years with an interim evaluation
Video Card without Dual Monitor Capability	Replace with Dual Monitor Capability
CRT and other Monitors	Replace with Flat Panel Monitors w/Dual Monitor Capability
Network Capable Printers	7 Years
Non-network Capable Printers	Replace with Network Capable Printers
Student Tablet	2.5 Years or at end of Operation System Useful Life
Faculty/Staff Tablet	2.5 Years or at end of Operation System Useful Life

The Technology Coordinating Council further recommends annual review of the plan by the Technology Coordinating Council to insure currency with industry standards including expansion to include newer technologies as appropriate.

Technical Advisory Committee Approved 6-16-2011
 Chancellor's Staff Review 8-17-2011
 District Planning Council Review 8-22-2011
 Chancellor's Cabinet/District Planning Council Approved 9-26-2011
 Technology Coordinating Council Revised and Approved 9-18-2012
 District Consultation Council Approved 10-22-2012
 Technology Coordinating Council Approved with no changes 9-17-2013
 District Consultation Council Approved with no changes 9-28-2013
 Technology Coordinating Council Revised and Approved 11-18-2014
 District Consultation Council Approved with changes 1-26-2015
 Technology Coordinating Council Approved with no changes 9-15-2015
 District Consultation Council Approved with no changes 11-23-2015
 Technology Coordinating Council Approved with no changes 11-28-17
 District Consultation Council Approved with no changes 01-22-18