

## University Budget Reduction Strategy

**Strategy:** Reduce number of seats in traditional computer labs by half

**Projected Savings:** \$730,000 year 1, \$999,000 year 2, \$660,000 ongoing

### **Background:**

- NC State provides numerous computing labs for students. Total of seats provided by OIT, the Library, and Colleges is about 3000 or a ratio of about 10 students per lab seat.
- Surveys indicate that 90%+ of students have their own computer and 80%+ have laptop computers.
- Ratio of students to lab seats is essentially the same as when students owning computers was relatively uncommon.
- During the last several years NC State has developed the virtual computing lab (VCL) that delivers applications needed for courses to students anywhere they have Internet access.

### **Proposal:**

- OIT data indicate that there are approximately 3000 lab computers being provided by OIT, the Library, and the Colleges and that these computers are refreshed every four years.
- Reduce the number of lab computer seats by half. Are not recommending eliminating all lab seats as there are likely applications that cannot be effectively delivered by VCL or provided to run on student owned computers.
- With approximately a quarter of the computers being replaced each year, the 50% reduction can be achieved by stopping refresh for two years and then resuming at half the previous funding level.
- In the second year, the number of lab support positions should be able to be reduced by half.
- Space freed up in labs can be used as student collaborative space.

### **Rationale:**

- **Relationship to Budget Reduction Criteria:**
  - Is it core: YES, the labs provide applications required to complete course requirements, but NO it is not core because there are alternative ways for students to access most of these applications.
  - Is it high-quality: N/A
  - Does it have high return-on-investment: It appears that VCL provides equally good student outcomes with lower cost. Also reuse of lab space as collaborative space may provide improved ROI for that space.
  - Is it unique: NO, VCL and student owned computers offer alternatives to traditional computer labs.

- Could it be more efficient and effective: YES; the VCL can provide many of the applications available in the labs for lower cost and to students wherever they have an Internet connection.
- **Peer analysis:**
- **Other information:**
  - Need to collect additional data on lab use including frequency of use, number of unique users, and purpose of use.
  - Data may indicate labs that should be eliminated or merged with other nearby labs.
  - Data may also indicate applications that can be eliminated.

Strategy for Implementation:

1. Seek endorsement of Academic IT Directors.
2. Seek endorsement of University IT Committee.
3. Review with Student leadership.
4. Review with Faculty Senate.
5. Review with Deans.
6. Implement two year halt in lab refresh purchases, provide additional funds to VCL to add additional capacity to offset decreased lab capacity.
7. Evaluate applications delivered in labs to identify any that may no longer be needed or that could be equally well (or better) delivered via VCL or on student owned computers – reduce lab images to include only those applications that are best delivered on lab computers
8. In year 2 decrease lab support staff by half
9. In year 3 resume lab refresh at half previous level.