DSS and Swarthmore College
Partnering to Enhance Service Delivery
Technology Solutions from the Sea Around Us
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IT Outsourcing is growing in Higher Education, although more slowly than in commercial markets and for different reasons.

- For 2001-2006, forecasted to grow at CAGR of 17%
- Cost saving is not the biggest driver
  - Reasons include lack of critical in-house skills, access to more advanced technologies, and operating efficiencies
- Flexibility and simplicity are key
  - “Selective sourcing” and “Partnership” better describe the contracts
  - Seek trusted partners that can fulfill multiple IT services

Sources
ECAR Respondent Summary, Gartner, Collegis
Leveraging the people and technology of an IT Infrastructure Services provider, Swarthmore College’s IT Support team enhanced their service delivery model.

- Improved service levels and delivery capability
- Improved availability of data for management decision making
- Increased ability to focus on strategic IT initiatives critical to institution’s success
Several issues affected Swarthmore’s ability to improve service levels and handle increasing demand.

- Personnel Management of Student resources
  - Availability is limited, dependability varies
  - Placement and training for complex role is time consuming and costly
  - Technical support and customer service levels are inconsistent
  - Turnover is continuous
- Did not have call tracking system
  - No tool for accurate and timely escalation of issues
  - No ability to analyze workloads and trends to be proactive
  - Difficult to determine root cause
Service level issues also contributed to more strategic concerns.

- IT Management was spending too much time on support rather than strategic issues
  - ITS scope of services always expanding; resources are fixed
  - Client services team’s input needed for planning and support of new services, such as wireless, new phone system, centralized backup, and others

- Investment in student wages was increasing over time as service quality was decreasing
  - Need to maintain existing budget and increase service level
Over the past 2-3 years, it became evident that Swarthmore’s IT Support team could not respond quickly and efficiently to growing number of help desk calls.

- Volume of call tickets increased dramatically
  - 3,802 in ’02 to 10,698 in ’04
  - User community values ITS; comfortable calling for support for increasingly complex issues
- Network Security became crucial
  - Help Desk time needed for forensics and clean-up
  - Significant resources needed to manage spyware
- Routine work absorbed all available resources
Background

- Residence Halls were underserved by ResTech, yet support was expensive.
  - Performance of ResTech team was inconsistent
    - Difficult to support more complex issues; variety of issues always increasing
    - Increased time required to resolve complex issues made it challenging for student employees with short shifts
    - Needed to change the support model from one-to-one sequential in dorm to centralized call center
  - Without a call tracking system, it was very difficult to track performance and provide constructive feedback to student employees
Goal: find a partner with experienced, professional support resources to increase service levels and availability while staying within existing budgets.

- Team was led by Associate Director of Client Services and Associate Director of Networking and Systems
- Determined which activities to perform in-house and which to outsource
- Considered consequences and benefits to ITS and the College
The project team identified several reasons to selectively outsource support.

- **Total cost** of ResTech service was too high relative to insufficient technical expertise and low service levels
  - Hiring and training a high turnover workforce was challenging
- Service requests exceeded ability to deliver
  - Skills for complex problems and infrequent requests
  - Availability – both peak volumes and now off hours and holidays
- ITS scope continued to expand
  - Need to plan and support new services
  - Backlog of strategic projects
Swarthmore ITS team remained committed to student workforce.

- No one would lose their campus job
- ResTech workforce turnover is 33% annually, could use natural attrition to reduce size of team
- Easier to manage and mentor a smaller group
- Financial Aid was consulted, determined there was many unfilled jobs on campus
The project team involved ITS staff and college community in project and partner selection.

- Selection process included:
  - Discussions with consultant
  - Research and narrowing list of providers
  - Meetings and site visits
  - Support from ITS managers and senior staff
  - Community meetings with students, faculty and staff, and student employees
  - Community involved in reference checks

- Solution had to fit Swarthmore culture and solve the support problem
The project team decided to outsource some support so staff could focus on more strategic activities.

- First line support by third party call center. Second line support by Swarthmore.
  - Greater hours of coverage
  - Robust tracking system to save time and provide better management data
- Outsourcing routine support would allow ITS to move forward with new services and product launches
DSS was selected and a new implementation project began to begin service for 2005-2006 year.

- Detailed implementation process
  - Gathered priorities and procedures
  - Established portal for collaboration (Quickplace)
  - Included cross training of teams
  - Involved entire ITS team, informed campus community
  - Conducted Res Net pilot with summer students

- People, processes, and tools in place for “go-live” on August 1
  - Not available in prior years, as students did not return until mid-August
Fall 2005 Results

- Initial results confirmed decision.
  - First call resolution rate measured 70% as semester began
  - Comprehensive call tracking software led to better second level support
    - Problems escalated rapidly and accurately
    - Faster resolution
  - Dorm consultants were able to focus on more technical on-site issues
  - Network registration process went smoothly
    - Students were able to register quickly
    - Quarantines and repairs processed faster
Partnership provides significant advantages.

- Higher first call resolution
- Reduced system downtime
- Reduced training time and cost
- Improved problem trend information
- Expanded support window (24x7)
- Increased student satisfaction levels
- Increased student employee satisfaction
- Increased ability for IT Management to focus strategically
Lessons learned in ResTech support project apply to other campus initiatives as well.

- Select a specific scope, proceed one step at a time
- Look for partners with flexibility to support variable requirements and campus culture
- Involve the entire community
- Recognize both tangible, operational results and intangible, strategic benefits
Swarthmore plans to continue co-sourcing with DSS.

- Providing after hours support for faculty and staff
- Exploring full campus support in new school year
- Providing DSS engineering services for network projects
- Providing DSS engineering services for storage and server consolidation projects
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