Information Technologies’ Device and Software Support Policy

Background
Historically, Information Technologies has been a strong advocate of the use of appropriate computing resources in the college’s classrooms and workplace. As the collaborative, productivity, and pedagogical opportunities associated with technology rapidly expand, it is important to note that the systems that support these opportunities grow in complexity, too. Desktop computers (“PCs”) are part of a larger connected system, and portable computing promises to change most notions of the dedicated workspace. In order to guarantee the highest quality of service, Information Technologies has developed the following guidelines to help members of the Worcester State College community make informed technology choices. The purpose of these guidelines is to offer the broadest range of supportable computing opportunities, while at the same time retaining the integrity of the college’s overall technology and network infrastructures.

Support Priorities
In order to maintain the integrity of critical campus-wide computing resources, Information Technologies will prioritize support requests as follows:

**Priority One—Core Services:** These are services essential to the basic infrastructure of campus computing. Such services include mail servers, routers, firewalls, authentication servers, etc. Failure of such services will impact all users in the college community and interrupt the college’s daily functions. Colleague also is included in this category.

**Priority Two—Critical Services:** These are services necessary to meet specific college-wide requirements and policies. Such services include Blackbaud, assessment programs, web services, public computing labs, etc. Failure of such services will impact specific users and groups who perform college critical functions.

**Priority Three—Enhanced Services:** These are services that offer value enhancement to the college community or are keyed to a specific department’s use. Such services include discipline-specific labs and software, some shared databases, and department specific labs. Failure of such services could potentially create significant inconvenience for a limited number of users.

**Priority Four—Desktop Services:** These are services associated with a user’s work location and include PCs, printing, and peripheral equipment. Failure of such services could result in personal inconvenience.

Please note that the priority list outline above will be consulted only during periods of excessive demand; Information Technologies has a strong commitment to meeting all service requests in a timely fashion.
**Supported Software**

Information Technology requires that only fully licensed software be installed on college-owned equipment. At this time, Information Technologies supports the following college-wide software:

- Microsoft Windows 2000/XP Professional
- Microsoft Office 2000 and XP, including FrontPage and Outlook
- Microsoft Visual Studio
- Microsoft Internet Explorer (Version 4 or newer)
- McAfee Antivirus
- SPSS Statistical Software (proposed for FY2004)

**Department Specific Software**

To enable the highest quality and consistency of service, academic and administrative departments are strongly encouraged to consult with Information Technologies early in the planning phase of any software acquisition. By working together, Information Technologies believes that potential compatibility and implementation problems can be minimized.

To evaluate academic and administrative software options, Information Technologies will need the following information to ensure that new software can be installed properly (and legally) in the college’s computing environment:

- **Location:** Where will the software be deployed? How will users access the software? How will this software integrate with other applications and technology development plans?

- **License:** The purchased licensing agreement must account for each workstation installation or each user access. Information Technologies cannot support partial installations in computing labs. When purchasing software for lab use, licenses must be ordered for each installation. *Departments are responsible for tracking and maintaining department-specific licensing and maintenance agreements.*

- **Demo:** Information Technologies will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the specified software will run in the college’s computing environment, but because of security and configuration concerns, as well as variations in software quality control, there is no guarantee that the selected software will be usable. In order to support individual software needs, Information Technologies strongly recommends that a demonstration copy of the software be acquired for testing purposes.

- **Timeline:** Information Technologies needs to know when the software needs to be implemented. Departments and users must budget into their planning adequate time for testing and evaluation; while exceptional situations will occur, Information Technologies cannot guarantee that last minute software installation and configuration requests can be accommodated.
- **Ongoing Responsibility**: Most business unit or academic specific software requires some area expertise on its final configuration and use. Information Technologies will work with academic and administrative departments on the initial installation of specialty software; additionally, Information Technologies will provide consultation services regarding PC and network issues. Information Technologies cannot, however, provide instructional support on how to use specialty software. Academic and administrative departments are strongly encouraged to identify a staff member who will assume ongoing responsibility for specialty software. This responsibility includes tracking and maintaining licensing, tracking product updates and patches, developing necessary user support options, and serving as the primary point of contact with Information Technologies.

**Computer/Employee Ratio**

No member of the faculty or administration will have more than one supported PC, excluding extraordinary individual circumstances as determined by Information Technologies and the appropriate area Vice President.

**Standard Desktop Support**

Information Technologies will support a standard software desktop consisting of an operating system, Microsoft Office Suite, specialty Worcester State College applications, and antivirus protection. Information Technologies will image this desktop; in the event that a user experiences difficulty with his or her PC, Information Technologies will make a reasonable attempt to troubleshoot and remedy the problem. If the problem cannot be remedied in a reasonable amount of time, or if the remedy would require a disproportionate amount of resources, then Information Technologies reserves the right to reinstall or reimage any or all software to return the PC to its original functionality. PC users are responsible for archiving their own data files. PCs are assigned to office spaces and not to individual users and Information Technologies reserves the right to reallocate PC technologies on a use and need basis. At this time, Information Technologies officially does not support faculty and staff laptops and mobile computing devices.

PC users are strongly recommended to avoid installing software without the guidance of Information Technologies. Any unsupported or unlicensed software or devices are installed at the user's own risk and liability.

**PC Hardware and Operating System Support**

Information Technologies recognizes that some campus users prefer non-Microsoft Windows operating systems for their daily computing. While Information Technologies understands that non-Microsoft Windows operating systems have considerable value, such systems are identified as unsupported in the college’s current computing environment. Given the scale and complexity of the college’s technology infrastructure and cost considerations, Information Technologies will purchase and support only PCs based on Microsoft Windows 2000/XP technologies.
Because non-Microsoft Windows PCs on campus are not supported, Information Technologies cannot offer any guarantee that they will function properly in the campus’s overall computing environment, including access to email, file storage, learning management systems, and administrative applications. Users of non-supported PCs must assume the cost and responsibility for support and ongoing maintenance.

Information Technologies will, however, work with individual faculty and staff members in assessing their technology needs. In the event that extraordinary individual circumstances (as determined by Information Technologies and the area Vice President) suggest that a non-Microsoft Windows PC is an appropriate solution for a specific demonstrated need, Information Technologies will recommend that a separate dedicated workstation be established to provide the necessary functionality.

*At this time, non-Microsoft Windows PCs on campus are considered to be legacy system. They should not be considered as justification for acquiring additional non-Microsoft Windows PCs.*

Any PCs or associated computer equipment purchased with faculty or staff development funds are considered to be the property of the college and subject to all appropriate policies and guidelines. Any PCs or associated computer equipment purchased with faculty or staff development funds must be selected from an Information Technologies approved configurations list, which will be available online and updated quarterly.

As the college’s technology infrastructure matures, Information Technologies anticipates that it may be able to support non-Microsoft Windows PC in the not too distant future. Until this time, these policies are critical to maintain a common technology platform to ensure greater consistency, usability, maintenance, and cost efficiency.

**Printers, PDAs, Peripheral Equipment**

Because of factors associated with the cost of peripherals and the overall total cost of ownership, Information Technologies does not support local ink jet or laser printing. Individuals who wish to maintain local printing will be responsible for the installation and upgrade of associated print drivers and related software, the acquisition and maintenance of any cabling and the actual printer itself, and the purchase of printing cartridges and associated printing consumables. Information Technologies will support network printing only, excluding extraordinary individual circumstances as determined by Information Technologies and the appropriate area Vice President.

In order to offer enhanced printing and document management services, Information Technologies is in the process of establishing central document management facilities in each academic and administrative building. Such facilities will enable high quality color laser printing, scanning, and document/image editing capabilities.

Information Technologies is in the process of developing a list of supported scanners, digital cameras, PDAs, and other peripheral equipment. Such approved equipment will be accorded a priority four service status. Peripheral equipment must be budgeted by the requesting individual or department, excluding extraordinary individual circumstances as determined by Information Technologies and the appropriate area Vice President.