

**MAIS STRATEGIC PLAN
– INTERNAL WORKING DRAFT –
SERVICE DELIVERY & GOVERNANCE**

SERVICE DELIVERY

A Foundation to Build On

MAIS deploys and maintains the enterprise systems that house information used institution-wide in administering the University. MAIS is organized to accomplish this charge by having application divisions directly aligned to the core processes of the University: e.g., student administration, financials and human resource management. The application divisions work closely with the central business offices to support their services to the University community, define effective end-to-end business processes, and leverage the enterprise systems to meet the University's business needs.

Since July 2000, MAIS has built significant credibility and a strong reputation for partnering with University business units to provide products that meet organizational needs. Business cases are made for all significant initiatives and effective financial tools have been developed to track and monitor expenditures.

MAIS has demonstrated significant proficiency in the area of systems integration – the acquiring of vendor provided applications and integrating them into the business processes and functions of the University. MAIS also has put a tremendous amount of focus on delivering self-service transactions which typically result in increasing the speed of services and accuracy of information, often at reduced costs.

In addition, MAIS has strong capabilities in helping the University leverage the M-Pathways investment. Once systems are in production, MAIS effectively maintains overall through-put and uptime and ensures the systems and data are secure. Production Support includes courteous and knowledgeable staff at the help desk as well as business systems analysts who provide users with onsite support as well as query and report development.

MAIS has developed an effective hiring and performance management process to ensure staff are highly skilled and productive. Many parts of the organization have developed and leveraged extensive experience in the areas of project management, systems development and production support.

Service Catalog

The service catalog describes why an IT organization exists – that is, what it does and what value it delivers from a user's point of view. The services represent the activities carried out by the IT

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organization and the effort associated with those activities. A service catalog needs to be user focused, that is defined from the user perspective, and oriented to the needs of the organization.

MAIS breaks its catalog down into two types of services: discretionary and non-discretionary. Non-discretionary services are those activities required to keep the current systems running. Often referred to as “production support,” these activities include the following services:

- Application maintenance – supporting regular processing such as payroll and general ledger, installing vendor supplied software updates and fixes, maintaining the data warehouse, batch scheduling, etc.
- Infrastructure maintenance – installing and maintaining the infrastructural hardware and software required for applications and databases to function.
- Security management – access process and support, user authentication and system protection.
- User support – online and instructor lead courses, call center help desk support and communications.

Discretionary services include activities that add new systems or features to the existing catalog. These activities include:

- Application development – the design, development, testing and implementation of new software applications or modifications to existing software applications.
- Report development– the design, development, testing and implementation of new reports or queries.
- Project management – ensuring on-time and within budget implementation of new products or services while optimizing the use of resources over the course of a project.
- Consulting – on-site support for leveraging the enterprise systems and business process improvement.

In an ideal world, MAIS would have minimal effort dedicated to non-discretionary activities in order to expand its discretionary capacity. The irony is the side effect of discretionary activities, such as introducing new systems functionality, often result in increasing the non-discretionary effort required to support the production environment. Without adjustments for new costs IT organizations redirect discretionary staff effort to production support activities. This reduces the capacity of the organization

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to deliver future projects. The erosion of discretionary effort makes IT organizations increasingly slow to respond to the University's needs.

Service Delivery Approach

What services MAIS delivers and how it delivers those services are based on the priorities of the University. When MAIS was created, University leadership felt it was important that MAIS have strong business expertise in order to better position the University to leverage the investment in the PeopleSoft applications and the resulting information asset.

In general, any organization must be competent in three areas to be successful: operational excellence, product leadership, and customer intimacy. The most successful organizations, while remaining competent in all areas, select one area in which to excel. Like the expression "Jack of all trades, master of non," organizations that do not choose an area to excel in relegate themselves to mediocrity and marketplace irrelevance. Treacy and Wiersema define the three areas in the following terms:¹

- Operational Excellence – operationally excellent organizations deliver a combination of quality, price, and ease of purchase that no one else in their market can match. They are not product or service innovators, nor do they cultivate one-to-one relationships with their customers. They execute extraordinarily well, and their proposition to customer is guaranteed low price an/or hassle-free service.
- Product Leadership – an organization pursuing product leadership continually pushes its products into the realm of the unknown, the untried, or the highly desirable. Its practitioners concentrate on offering customers products or services that expand existing performance boundaries. A product leader's proposition to customers is best product, period.
- Customer Intimacy – an organization that delivers value via customer intimacy builds bonds with customers like those between good neighbors. Customer-intimate organizations don't deliver what the market wants, but what a specific customer wants. The customer-intimate organization makes a business of knowing the people it sells to and the products and services they need. It continually tailors its products and services, and does so at reasonable prices.

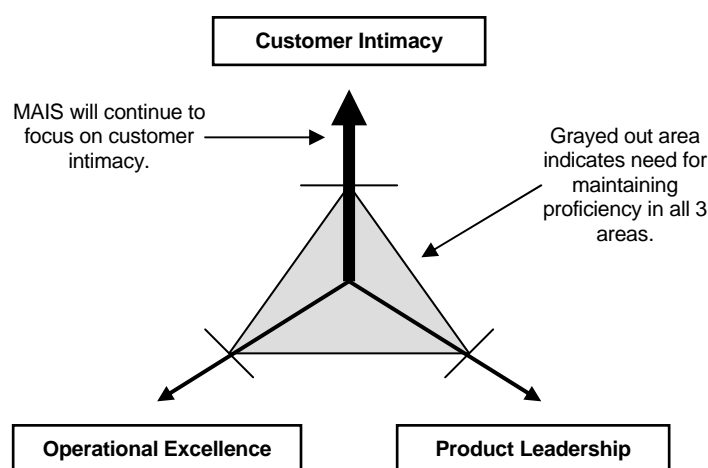
To gain returns on the M-Pathways investment, MAIS chose to excel in customer intimacy to develop a better understanding the business needs of the University. As a result, the MAIS application

¹ Treacy, Michael and Fred Wiersema, The Discipline of Market Leaders, Perseus Books, Cambridge, MA, 1995.

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divisions were organized in a way that closely aligned them to the University’s central business offices. This was consistent with the vision and expectations of University leadership in 2001. Customer intimacy will remain the primary focus of MAIS service delivery, however, MAIS must broaden its focus to include more users outside of the central business offices, especially those in the academic units. Moreover, to achieve excellence, in addition to focusing on customer intimacy MAIS must maintain adequate levels of operational excellence and product leadership (see figure 2).

Figure 2: MAIS Organizational Competencies²



General Recommendations

Customer Intimacy: Going forward, MAIS needs to realign its target positioning within the organizational competencies framework. MAIS will continue to strive to be a customer intimate organization but needs to broaden its focus – MAIS has been effective at partnering with central offices but must expand to more direct relationships with schools and colleges. To achieve the strategic goal of improving the work life of faculty and educational experience of students, MAIS will need to investigate new approaches for service delivery to provide integrated services that cross data areas and systems.

Product Leadership: MAIS purposefully chose to not adopt leading edge technology because of the impact of change on business process stability. MAIS needs to temper this approach with the need to

² Treacy, Michael, *The Discipline of Market Leaders*, Figures Copyright © 1997 by Michael Treacy. Reprinted by permission of Basic Books, a member of Perseus Books Group.

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be nimble enough to better meet the needs of schools and colleges and to help maintain the University's competitive advantage. The challenge will be in keeping a balance. MAIS and its business partners will selectively identify projects and technologies that will differentiate the University in strategic areas.

Recognizing there will always be unique departmental needs that an enterprise IT system cannot meet, MAIS will move to implement more flexible standards based applications and infrastructure technologies to enable more effective and seamless integration with departmental systems. MAIS is investigating technologies which will provide better access to enterprise data. If a departmental system could potentially benefit a significant portion of the University community, MAIS will investigate how to leverage the system across campus. .

Operational Excellence: MAIS should continually improve in the area of operational excellence. Efficiency in operations must be an ongoing effort as more and more is added to the MAIS portfolio while seeing minimal increases in base budget. While MAIS has been effective in maintaining operational excellence, improvements in production support efficiency will provide more discretionary capacity. MAIS will need to investigate how it can increase its discretionary capacity by streamlining service delivery approaches and better leveraging existing services across product areas.

MAIS will investigate how to improve horizontal support functions across MAIS such as system access, performance support, and application tuning. In addition, MAIS will investigate the viability of adding or adapting the following support functions:

- An enterprise architecture function does not exist in MAIS, and should be positioned as a common role across all groups (e.g., not just in one CPU or infrastructure group).
- A more proactive Project Management Office role is typically evolved to move beyond coaching and tracking to risk analysis, resource balancing and compliance tracking (against SDLC and project management methodologies, etc.).
- A central IT Service Management function should be considered to implement an IT service-orientation and consistent processes/tools from a top-down approach rather than bottom-up consensus.

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- A relationship management function should be considered in order to better address customer needs that cross product/service lines from multiple divisions. Special emphasis will be placed on improving support for schools and colleges.
- A measurement or metrics reporting role is growing more common to address the contribution of IT question more directly and in customer terms than any one group within IT can do.

Finally, MAIS will continue to work with its central business office partners to reduce the number of modifications to systems that do not have a direct impact on any of the strategic priorities. System modifications add complexity which diminishes operational efficiency. It is important this trade-off is recognized so that when modifications are made, the strategic benefits for the University are clear.

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GOVERNANCE

IT governance is about decision making that leads to better alignment of IT and the business. Governance is concerned with the allocation of IT resources to support the priorities of the organization. Effective IT governance creates an environment in which decisions about IT investments and operations are based on a clear understanding of how IT delivers business value.³

MAIS Governance Approach

From a strategic perspective, the MAIS Advisory Committee advises the Associate Vice President for MAIS on matters related to administrative information systems and services. The group ensures the strategic and tactical plans of MAIS are aligned with the mission, goals, and administrative needs of the University. The membership of the committee is comprised of senior University officials responsible for the major business functions supported by MAIS, officials from the Provost Office and Health System, and representatives from academic units.

Projects that require capital funding follow the University's enterprise IT funding request process which is overseen by the University's IT Projects Committee. The IT Projects Committee has leadership representatives from MAIS, ITCS (Information Technology Central Services), the Office of the Provost, Medical Affairs and the Vice President for Finance. The IT Projects Committee convenes every other month to review all projects as they progress through the review, approval and funding steps. Projects must require at least \$50,000 in one-time funding to be included in the review process.

From an operational perspective, as the application divisions are aligned closely to central business offices, a great degree of autonomy has been afforded to MAIS divisions in terms of how work is prioritized and conducted. The business processes and goals of the business offices are unique therefore, in aligning to these various processes, the governance approach for each of the divisions tends to vary.

The student administration application division has numerous advisory committees with are made up of members from central business offices and academic units. The advisory committees are aligned to the products the division supports (e.g., student recruiting and admissions) and are charged with

³ Roberts, John, "Delivering Business Value Through Effective Governance," October 2003, Gartner Inc.

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ensuring the plans of the division align with user needs. These groups participate in the review and prioritization of system enhancements and may also contribute to process improvement ideas within each product area. The division assess its overall capacity and uses the identified priorities to determine how to allocate its discretionary capacity.

Currently the Financial and HR application divisions set priorities through collaboration with central office leadership.

In general, each MAIS division works with their constituent user communities to identify and prioritize new products or enhancements. These projects are then reviewed on a quarterly basis with MAIS senior management for resource commitment and scheduling purposes. Large projects that often require some form of additional funding, whether it is reallocation of existing MAIS funds or a request for additional funding from the University, are generally reviewed by the Associate Vice President of MAIS and the divisional directors before significant resource commitments are made.

General Recommendations

The current MAIS approach for governance is too varied and needs to be more consistent to provide improved transparency in the how the University's IT resources are allocated. There is no cohesive mechanism in place for prioritizing projects and allocating resources across divisional boundaries.

In addition, in order to improve operational efficiency by better leveraging existing services across product areas, MAIS needs to determine the right balance for centralizing vs. decentralizing internal MAIS services. Many of the methodologies, standards and policies are treated as optional guidelines for how each division or team can choose to do their work. This ranges from project management methodologies, IT support process participation, tool usage, etc. No formal repercussions for not following common processes exist nor is there any formal tracking or reporting of compliance to required standards.

Moreover, while there are numerous committees and management forums for discussing and deciding how things are done and should be done across MAIS, a consensus driven culture that appears to strive for 100% agreement often slows down and dilutes decision-making.

In light of these observations, MAIS leadership has agreed to make it a priority to investigate how to improve:

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- Internal decision making processes
- Decision follow-through and enforcement mechanisms
- Portfolio management process (project approval, prioritization and resource allocation).

In addition, MAIS will also investigate how to improve its approach for managing and enforcing methodologies:

- Project management
- Systems development
- Performance support (end user training and communications)
- Other methodologies as needed.