

AITS STRATEGIC PLAN: PROGRESS REPORT FOR FY23

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THE PLAN

The AITS strategic plan was created through discussions with our customers, a review of higher education and IT trends and forecasts, as well as a review of the University of Illinois System and Universities' strategic plans. Some of the goals presented represent stretch goals that will be pursued as resources are available and other goals are satisfied. Each goal and initiative have a different priority, and the priority changes throughout the year depending on environmental factors such as funding, urgency, University needs, vendor partnerships and human resource availability.

Overall, the AITS Strategic Plan outlines the information technology strategies and initiatives and is designed to be a three-year IT plan that evolves with collaborative input alongside other strategic plans throughout the University of Illinois System.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Planning is a continual and integral function at AITS. The AITS Strategic Plan outlines the information technology strategies and initiatives of AITS. It is designed to be a three-year IT plan that evolves with collaborative input alongside other strategic plans throughout the University. This plan has been built in collaboration with our customers and IT Governance across the University. The six strategic priorities guide and prioritize our actions to make administrative IT as simple and beneficial as possible for our customers:

- Enterprise-class services: Support and enable the University of Illinois System's business processes with reliable, secure, up to date, and accessible enterprise IT services.
- Operational efficiencies: Improve the University of Illinois System's operational efficiencies through business process improvement, strategic automation, and integrations.
- User experience: Provide excellent user experience for our staff, faculty, and students.
- Data management, quality, and tools: Provide our clients with the technology and support needed effectively and efficiently use the University of Illinois System's data assets.
- Workforce: Hire, develop, and retain a talented workforce to support the University of Illinois System's strategic priorities.
- Alignment and engagement: Communicate and collaborate with our peers and clients to align our efforts and engage our stakeholders.
- Strategic finance (new for FY24): Continue to be a good steward of the System's resources by continuously improving our operations and pro-actively planning and managing our budget.

FOUNDATION

MISSION

We provide a wide range of administrative information technology solutions and services to the University community that are accessible, reliable, accurate, efficient, and responsive to customer needs. We collaborate to proactively identify opportunities, manage risks, plan future initiatives, and solve problems by leveraging all our information technology resources and knowledge. We continually measure and evaluate our services to optimize them for the University community.

VISION

To be an engaged partner within our University community to advance the institution's mission and administrative functions. We will provide information technologies and services that will balance the need to be innovative, collaborative, and easy to use while also being reliable, predictable, and relevant to the University community who utilize them.

STRENGTHS

- AITS culture
- Employee skills and expertise
- System-wide reputation and relationships
- Great management and work processes
- IT maturity

WE ARE GUIDED BY

- The strategic plans for UIC, UIUC, UIS, and the System.
- Industry best practices and trends
- Strategic issues and concerns expressed by our clients.
- Higher education technology trends and forecasts.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND GOALS FOR FY23-25

ENTERPRISE-CLASS SERVICES

Support and enable the University of Illinois System's business processes with reliable, secure, up to date and accessible enterprise IT services.

- Ensure enterprise systems are highly available and up to date.
- Improve our protection for sensitive and high-risk information.
- Improve disaster recovery processes.

USER EXPERIENCE

Provide an excellent user experience for our staff, faculty, and students.

- Improve digital accessibility and processes.
- Provide new and enhanced enterprise business systems.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Improve the University of Illinois System's operational efficiencies through business process improvement, strategic automation, and integrations.

- Increase time savings for the university through high efficiency automation.
- Increase the University's utilization of business process improvement.
- Improve and increase integration opportunities with enterprise systems.

DATA MANAGEMENT, QUALITY, AND TOOLS

Provide our clients with the technology and support needed to use the University of Illinois System's data assets effectively and efficiently.

- Enable data-driven decision making.
- Enhance data quality in targeted areas.
- Develop and implement a data literacy program.
- Implement system office data governance.

WORKFORCE

Hire, develop, and retain a talented workforce to support the University of Illinois system's strategic priorities.

- Enhance efforts to attract a talented workforce.
- Develop current AITS employees to enhance career opportunities and job satisfaction.

ALIGNMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Communicate and collaborate with our peers and clients to align our efforts and engage our stakeholders.

- Improve governance collaboration.
- Create and participate in communities of practice.
- Improve awareness of the value of the services AITS provides.

STRATEGIC FINANCE

Continue to be a good steward of the System's resources by continuously improving our operations and pro-actively planning and managing our budget.

- Streamline operational processes.
- Optimize financial process.

FY23 IMPACT

ENTERPRISE-CLASS SERVICES - IMPACT

Support and enable the University of Illinois System's business processes with reliable, secure, up to date and accessible enterprise IT services.

GOALS

- Ensure enterprise systems are highly available and up to date.
- Improve our protection for sensitive and high-risk information.
- Improve disaster recovery processes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Successful live failover test: We executed a comprehensive live failover test, transitioning all production systems to our secondary data center. This involved over 950 applications, 340 servers, and 300 TB of storage. The systems ran seamlessly for approximately 18 hours, demonstrating the effectiveness of our failover strategy and our abilities to maintain business continuity.
- Implemented new enterprise backup system: We evaluated, acquired, and implemented the hardware and software for a new enterprise storage backup system. This new backup solution is the key component of our ransomware mitigation solution, which will be implemented in FY24.
- Core business systems upgrades and maintenance: We kept our core business systems up to date with regular upgrades and patches for compliance and security, including successful back-end system upgrades. Examples include our financial aid system, our web application development platform, Source to Pay, the new Banner integration service, and our identity management software. These all ensure secure and efficient operations.
- ERP technology readiness assessment and roadmap: Conducting a thorough ERP technology readiness assessment, we developed a roadmap, sharing significant updates with stakeholders to ensure transparency and alignment. We actively participate in ERP conferences and peer conversations to stay informed about industry trends and best practices.
- Cybersecurity: We implemented 855 security patches on our Windows, Linux, and Solaris servers (417,791 total security updates applied) and blocked up to 71 million daily cyberattacks. By implementing 2FA, migrating our document repository system, and cleaning up the document repository, we enhanced protection for high-priority systems and data.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Uptime

FY23 Target: >99%

FY23 Actual: 99.99%

New enterprise backup, recovery, ransomware readiness, and rapid failover solution implemented and tested

FY23 Target: 100% complete

FY23 Actual: 100% complete with backup and recovery solution.

Ransomware mitigation implementation postponed to FY24.

Percentage complete of 11 targeted security enhancements

FY23 Target: 100%

FY23 Actual: 86%

Addressing active security incidents took precedence over our enhancements. As such, some items were deferred.

USER EXPERIENCE - IMPACT

Provide an excellent user experience for our staff, faculty, and students.

GOALS

Provide an excellent user experience for our staff, faculty, and students.

- Improve digital accessibility and processes.
- Provide new and enhanced enterprise business systems.

HIGHLIGHTS

- System office digital accessibility exception process: The system office successfully implemented the digital accessibility exception process, establishing the System Office Accessibility Review Committee to provide guidance on accessibility policies and review exception requests. This ensures that digital accessibility remains a priority and facilitates adherence to accessibility standards.
- Testing and updating enterprise applications for accessibility: We rigorously tested and updated over 93 enterprise applications, improving compliance with accessibility guidelines and inclusivity. We also increased capacity by 50% for system office/enterprise digital accessibility work and collaborated with System Office Shared Services to enhance accessibility across our systems.
- New and enhanced enterprise business systems: We introduced new best of breed HR systems (Cornerstone and JDXpert), a user-friendly Training and Development Resources site in collaboration with System Human Resource Services, a document compliance and modification solution within Contracts+, a Graduate College Tuition Waiver and Fellowship Application, an improved Illinois Procurement Bulletin System, and student proxy functionality in our Banner ERP system. These improvements enhance operational efficiency and user experiences across various functions within the organization.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Percentage complete of system office digital accessibility exception process

FY23 Target: 50%

FY23 Actual: 50%

User Satisfaction through postproduction surveys

FY23 Target: >70%

FY23 Actual: Our measurement method was not effective. We are redesigning this for FY24.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES - IMPACT

Improve the University of Illinois System's operational efficiencies through business process improvement, strategic automation, and integrations.

GOALS

- Increase time savings for the university through high impact automation.
- Increase the University’s utilization of business process improvement.
- Improve and increase integration opportunities with enterprise systems.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Automation: Our automations have significantly streamlined processes, reduced manual efforts, and enabled employees to focus on more value-added tasks, resulting in increased overall productivity.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Hours saved by automation

FY23 Target: 17.8K

FY23 Actual: 47.0K

Includes AITS developed automations in FormBuilder, RPA, K2, and Banner Workflow.

Number of unique units using BPI

FY23 Target: 50

FY23 Actual: 54

Number of web service transactions

FY23 Target: 256m

FY23 Actual: 422m

TIME SAVED BY SOLUTION	DEPLOYED IN FY23
FORMBUILDER (ALL UNITS)	206,292
FORMBUILDER SOLUTIONS DEVELOPED BY AITS	12,778
K2	7,131
RPA	11,950
OTHER (BANNER WORKFLOW)	15,150
ADOBESIGN TIME SAVED (ALL UNITS)	99,796
TOTAL TIME (HRS) SAVED ANNUALLY	353,097

- Business process improvement services (BPI): AITS has continued to provide its popular business process improvement services to units across the System. In FY23 alone, we successfully completed 29 separate engagements. Additionally, we launched a purpose-focused BPI training program that offers guidance and ongoing support to participants as they undertake BPI projects within their respective units.
- Integration services: AITS plays a crucial role in enabling seamless data flow between software solutions by providing over 634 integrations which eliminate the need for manual data entry or data duplication, improving accuracy and efficiency. In FY23, our primary focus was on transferring six integrations to the API gateway, which offers greater flexibility, scalability, and standardization. Furthermore, we expanded integrations using the new Banner Ethos integration service.

DATA MANAGEMENT, QUALITY, AND TOOLS - IMPACT

Provide our clients with the technology and support needed to use the University of Illinois System's data assets effectively and efficiently.

GOALS

- Enable data-driven decision making.
- Enhance data quality in targeted areas.
- Develop and implement a data literacy program.
- Implement system office data governance.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enhancements and planning:
 - We upgraded our system-wide reporting and data visualization tool EDDIE/Web Intelligence. This improves the ease at which our clients can analyze, visualize, and report out data.
 - We implemented reporting and ad hoc analysis capabilities for two enterprise systems (Chrome River and Cornerstone), ensuring standardized practices and providing reliable insights into performance and operations.
 - We completed the roadmap for the next generation data analytics platform and obtained approval from executive leadership to implement the roadmap. It will introduce data virtualization and data lake services to the university. Additionally, an improved data acquisition and movement tool will enable connectivity to new cloud and SaaS data sources. With these capabilities, stakeholders can better integrate and analyze data to acquire needed insights.
- Data governance and collaboration: We established the System Office Data Governance Working Group to build effective data management, integrity, and quality processes and policies across the System. We also partnered in the establishment of the UIC Data Committee and actively participate in the UIUC Data Advisory Governance Committee, fostering strong partnerships and enabling comprehensive data governance strategies.
- Data literacy and consulting: In FY23, we began drafting a data literacy and consulting program to enhance data skills across the university and provide personalized education and support to empower individual departments to leverage data effectively. Implementation of the program will take place in FY24, building towards the democratization of data skills and capabilities that will enhance informed decision making and analysis across the university.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Active users for all data tools

FY23 Target: 4.2K

FY23 Actual: 4.2K

New usage of data solutions after training and consulting

Our target will be set for FY24. Our FY23 focus was to hire staff and draft the program, which we accomplished.

Data quality improvement metric

We have not identified our data quality improvement metric. Our focus this past year was to identify an area and start the conversations, which we did.

System office data governance implemented and supporting activities completed

FY23 Target: 50% complete

FY23 Actual: 50%

WORKFORCE - IMPACT

Hire, develop, and retain a talented workforce to support the University of Illinois system's strategic priorities.

GOALS

- Enhance efforts to attract a talented workforce.
- Develop current AITS employees to enhance career opportunities and job satisfaction.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Career opportunities newsletter: We created a career opportunities newsletter. This serves as a valuable resource to keep employees informed about potential advancements within the organization, inspiring them to explore new roles and responsibilities for professional growth.
- Strategic professional development planning and tracking: We have improved our professional development planning to align individual growth with organizational goals, investing in relevant learning opportunities to develop employees' skills and contribute to our overall strategy. Additionally, our new tracking and planning tool streamlines the process for requesting and fulfilling professional development needs.
- Onboarding enhancements: Our enhanced onboarding program ensures a smooth transition for new employees, making them feel welcomed, supported, and equipped to contribute effectively from day one through comprehensive orientation, introductions, and access to necessary resources.
- Workforce engagement team: With the establishment of a Workforce Engagement Team, we enhanced our hiring processes and candidate experience by implementing best practices, streamlining procedures, and ensuring inclusivity.
- Process Improvement for Searches and Personnel Actions: We established a new process to focus on improving communication channels and practices throughout the job posting to hiring process, keeping all stakeholders informed and engaged for transparent and efficient hiring operations.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

Average number of qualified applicants per search.

FY23 Target: 6

FY23 Actual: 18.5

Nonretirement attrition.

FY23 Target: 5

FY23 Actual: 5

ALIGNMENT AND ENGAGEMENT - IMPACT

Communicate and collaborate with our peers and clients to align our efforts and engage our stakeholders.

GOALS

- Improve governance collaboration.
- Create and participate in communities of practice.
- Improve awareness of the value of the services AITS provides.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Regular strategic discussions with stakeholders: In FY23 we established regular strategic discussions with our stakeholders. These discussions help to align business and IT strategies, address concerns, and improve decision-making, fostering stronger stakeholder relationships and better outcomes.
- Implemented new enterprise system status solution (Status Hub): The new system status solution through Status Hub provides real-time updates on critical system status, enhancing communication, reducing downtime, and improving operational efficiency by serving as a centralized platform for employees to check system statuses. This also provides a platform for any units on campus to utilize without additional cost.
- Cultivation of professional communities and IT collaboration working groups: We actively engage in diverse professional communities and IT collaboration groups, promoting knowledge sharing, inter-departmental collaboration, and innovative solutions to IT challenges.
- ITPC Planning Summit: In our effort to improve IT governance processes, we evaluated current ITPC practices and planned a summit to increase participation and communication within that framework.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

Percentage complete of 2 targeted governance improvements

FY23 Target: 100%

FY24 Actual: 50%.

The ITPC summit will be held in the Fall.

Active FormBuilder administrators participating in the community of practice

FY23 Target: 10%





FY23 Actual: 18.5%












Percentage complete of 7 targeted activities to improve awareness of AITS and its services







FY23 Target: 100%

FY23 Actual: 100%

FY23 PERFORMANCE

 On track or completed	 Slightly off track	 Off Track	 TBD, Deferred, or Carried over.
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Status	Metric	EOY Target	YTD Actual
	Uptime	99%	99.99%
	Percentage complete of 11 targeted enhancements to better protect sensitive and high-risk information	100%	86% Addressing active security incidents took precedence over our enhancements. As such, some items were deferred.
	New enterprise backup, recovery, ransomware, and rapid failover solution implemented and tested	100%	100% of disaster recovery work complete. Ransomware solution extended into FY24.
	Percentage complete of new digital accessibility process.	50%	50%
	User satisfaction via postproduction surveys	70%	N/A
	Hours saved by automation	17.8K	47.0K
	Number of unique units using BPI	50	54
	Number of web service transactions	256m	422m
	Active users for all data tools	4.2k	4.2K
	New usage of data solutions after training and consulting (Target to be set in FY24)	N/A	N/A
	Data quality metric TBD in FY25. Current measurement is % complete of targeted activities.	100%	100%

Status	Metric	EOY Target	YTD Actual
	System office data governance implemented and supporting activities completed	50%	50%
	Average number of qualified applicants per search	6	18.5
	Nonretirement attrition levels	5	5
	Percentage complete of 2 governance improvements	50%	50%
	Percentage of FormBuilder administrators actively participating in the community of practice	10%	18.5%
	Percentage complete of 7 activities to improve awareness and value of service	100%	100%

ROADMAP

As each fiscal year concludes, we assess our progress and whether our actions have had the intended impacts. These reflections shape our priorities for the upcoming year. Presented below is our focus for FY24 for each Strategic Direction. FY23 data is provided to highlight the shifts that we made.

Strategic directions and goals	FY23 Focus	FY24 Focus	FY25
<p>1-Enterprise-class Services</p> <p>Support and enable the University of Illinois System's business processes with reliable, secure, up to date, and accessible enterprise IT services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure enterprise systems are highly available and up to date. – Improve our protection for sensitive and high-risk information. – Improve disaster recovery processes. 	<p>ERP technology readiness and roadmap</p> <p>Technical architecture roadmaps</p> <p>Expand 2FA</p> <p>Security mitigations</p> <p>High-risk data stores</p> <p>Disaster recovery—implemented and tested rapid recovery</p>	<p>ERP roadmap</p> <p>Technical architecture process</p> <p>Expand and modernize 2FA</p> <p>Security mitigations</p> <p>High-risk data stores</p> <p>Ransomware readiness</p>	TBD
<p>2-User Experience</p> <p>Provide an excellent user experience for our staff, faculty, and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve digital accessibility and processes. – Provide new and enhanced enterprise business systems. 	<p>Accessibility process</p> <p>Continuing education administration software</p> <p>Automated testing</p> <p>Measures of success</p> <p>Security application</p> <p>Ensure we are getting the most out of what we own</p>	<p>Accessibility process rollout</p> <p>Self-service and Ellucian Experience implementation</p> <p>Security application</p>	TBD
<p>3-Operational Efficiencies.</p> <p>Improve the University of Illinois System's operational efficiencies through business</p>	<p>High impact BPA</p> <p>BPI training program</p> <p>IQ bot</p>	<p>High impact BPA</p> <p>BPI training and coaching</p> <p>Ethos integrations</p>	TBD

Strategic directions and goals	FY23 Focus	FY24 Focus	FY25
<p>process improvement, strategic automation, and integrations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase time savings for the university through high impact automation. – Increase the University’s utilization of business process improvement. – Improve and increase integration opportunities with enterprise systems. 	<p>Ethos integrations Migrating integrations to APIs Retire Java Messaging Service (JMS)</p>	<p>Migrating integrations to APIs Retire JMS</p>	
<p>4-Data</p> <p>Provide our clients with the technology and support needed to use the University of Illinois System’s data assets effectively and efficiently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enable data-driven decision making. – Enhance data quality in targeted areas. – Develop and implement a data literacy program. – Implement system office data governance. 	<p>Data analytics roadmap Current tool improvements Data quality Data literacy System office data governance</p>	<p>Data virtualization Data lakes Data consulting and literacy training System office and system-wide data governance</p>	TBD
<p>5-Workforce</p> <p>Hire, develop, and retain a talented workforce to support the University of Illinois system's strategic priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enhance efforts to attract a talented workforce. – Develop current AITS employees to enhance career opportunities and job satisfaction. 	<p>Strategic professional development Onboarding process Career opportunities awareness Recruitment improvement Engagement</p>	<p>Role-specific professional development Onboarding automation Recruitment improvement Engagement</p>	TBD

Strategic directions and goals	FY23 Focus	FY24 Focus	FY25
<p>6-Alignment and Collaboration</p> <p>Communicate and collaborate with our peers and clients to align our efforts and engage our stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve governance collaboration. – Create and participate in communities of practice. – Improve awareness of the value of the services AITS provides. 	<p>ITPC process and communication</p> <p>Governance collaboration</p> <p>Project processes and communication</p> <p>Workflow tool community</p> <p>System status communication tool</p>	<p>Shared IT initiatives governance</p> <p>ITPC process and communication</p> <p>Higher Education Data Warehouse conference</p> <p>Service catalog alignment</p> <p>Communities of practice</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>7-Strategic Finance</p> <p>Continue to be a good steward of the System’s resources by continuously improving our operations and pro-actively planning and managing our budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Streamline operational processes. – Optimize financial processes. 		<p>Inventory and asset tracking</p> <p>Access management</p> <p>Reporting</p> <p>Hardware and software maintenance</p> <p>Procurement</p>	<p>TBD</p>