The results of the twelfth annual EDUCAUSE Current Issues Survey reflect the everyday balancing act that IT leaders need to perform. Many of the issues show the need for continued and thoughtful long-range planning, yet new issues have also risen quickly to the top, requiring nimbleness in both thought and act.
Top-Ten IT Issues, 2011

1. Funding IT
2. Administrative/ERP/Information Systems
3. Teaching and Learning with Technology
4. Security
5. Mobile Technologies
6. Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness
7. Governance, Portfolio/Project Management
8. Infrastructure/Cyberinfrastructure
9. Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity
10. Strategic Planning

Administered by the EDUCAUSE Current Issues Committee, the electronic survey was conducted in December 2010. Survey participants—typically CIOs of EDUCAUSE member institutions—were asked to select the five most-important IT issues out of a selection of twenty-seven in each of four areas: (1) issues that are critical for strategic success; (2) issues that are expected to increase in significance; (3) issues that demand the greatest amount of the campus IT leader’s time; and (4) issues that require the largest expenditures of human and fiscal resources.

The top-four issues critical for strategic success remain the same as in last year’s survey, though with a slightly different ranking: Funding IT; Administrative/ERP/Information Systems; Teaching and Learning with Technology; and Security. Whereas context was the word used to describe the results of the 2010 survey, the word perspective better characterizes the 2011 survey. For example, when it comes to Funding IT (#1), the focus in the past has largely been on securing a stable and predictable level of funding. Although that remains a critical need, the IT leader now also needs to factor in the perspective of the campus community members and to show them the value of existing services and investments as well as the true cost of future decisions. Administrative/ERP/Information Systems (#2) also benefits from examining the perspective of those who use these services. Is the time right to disaggregate the monolithic ERP system and use best-of-breed solutions, especially those that may be offered in the “cloud” as a Software as a Service (SaaS)? Is it time to change the focus from desktop access for administrative information to access via the ever-growing types of mobile devices? For Teaching and Learning with Technology (#3), the perspective needs to encompass not only classroom technologies but also the ubiquitous use of instructional technologies to support the educational mission of the institution overall. Security (#4) likewise poses a dualistic need for perspective. On the one hand, higher education institutions are increasingly seeking and securing cloud-based services to meet campus needs. On the other hand, the institutions are themselves cloud-based service providers—to the members of their own communities. This “man-in-the-middle” position requires IT leaders to understand the needs, the perspectives, of both consumers and providers. While we seek security assurances from those with whom we have chosen to partner for cloud-based services, we are also mindful of the relative lack of security on the devices that are used to access our institutional resources.

The need to fully appreciate perspective is perhaps most evident in the issue of Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness (#6). Now more than ever, IT leaders and the campus as a whole must realize that technological
change demands flexibility and nimbleness. New technologies and new requests for services cannot and should not be perceived as detracting from the institutional mission. Rather, IT leaders need to remember that anticipating and responding to such change is a fundamental requirement of our organizations. We need to change our perspective to see how new technologies and services can enhance the services that are provided to or consumed by the campus community.

Nothing more clearly illustrates this than the debut, at #5, of Mobile Technologies in the list of top-ten issues of strategic importance. More important, Mobile Technologies is the #1 issue that IT leaders felt had the potential to become more significant.

In the past, many of us may have viewed mobile technologies as a nonessential nuisance to the networking and user services groups. After all, our institutions were providing a robust wired network connecting campus-owned computers to central resources. Now we all find ourselves struggling to meet the growing demands for wireless services on a multitude of mobile devices that are owned by individuals, not by the institution. We need to place ourselves in the position of these individuals in order to see the value from their perspective and to then engage in a conversation on how to best provide services within the confines of our own economic and political climate.

These increasingly mobile needs of users, coupled with complexity introduced by a bewildering array of potential off-campus cloud and third-party services, have challenged many foundational elements of traditional IT services. Conventional ways of viewing Governance, Portfolio/Project Management (#7), Infrastructure/Cyberinfrastructure (#8), Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity (#9), and Strategic Planning (#10) are quickly becoming obsolete. A holistic perspective is called for when considering appropriate and strategic solutions.

Finally, we should note that two topics from the 2010 list of top-ten issues critical for strategic success dropped off this year’s list: Identity/Access Management and Learning Management Systems. Though both continue to be topics of significance in the profession (coming in at #11 and #12, respectively), they were edged out this year by the meteoric rise of interest in Mobile Technologies.

The remainder of this article focuses on the top-ten issues that IT leaders identified as the most important for their institutions to resolve for strategic success. For each issue, members of the 2011 EDUCAUSE Current Issues Committee offer a few thoughts and a set of questions, with each section written by individual members of the committee:

- Funding IT, by Theresa Rowe; Administrative/ERP/Information Systems, by Nadine Stern; Teaching and Learning with Technology, by Andrea Henne; Security, by Michael R. McPherson; Mobile Technologies, by Joseph A. Moreau; Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness, by Linda Mehlinger; Governance, Portfolio/Project Management, by Joseph Vaughan; Infrastructure/Cyberinfrastructure, by Michael Richichi; Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity, by James Estrada; and Strategic Planning, by Ann Kovachick. The questions are not meant to be comprehensive; they are intended to encourage further thinking and discussion.

**ISSUE #1 Funding IT**

**Funding IT**, the #1 issue again this year, is the foundation for the remaining top-nine IT issues. Technology generates high expectations, and high expectations correlate to high costs. There is perpetual agitation between these costs of high expectations and the ability of campuses to effectively and consistently fund technology solutions to meet these expectations. Short-term budget decreases and long-term lack of budget growth increase the agitation. IT leaders must be effective in managing the situation and bringing strategy into the picture. In the best cases, IT leaders are using budget constraints as drivers for change motivation and for evaluation of strategic technology direction. IT leaders are also using an updated vocabulary to discuss new economic realities:

- Multi-year predictable budgets
- Budget transparency, showcasing fixed and nondiscretionary commitments that lock funds
- Show-backs (rather than charge-backs), explaining to campus constituents the true cost of technology decisions
- Common language descriptors for new expectations: convenience, mobility, edge-devices, consumerization, virtualization, presence, accessibility, interactive, integration, social networking, cloud computing, evidence-based, data-driven, process efficiencies
- Return-on-value, return-on-mission, and return-on-investment analyses
- Organizational capacity for adding new technologies given licensing costs, hardware investment, and staffing costs
- Legacy termination

IT leaders and CIOs need to be experts with language that is focused on working within budget retrenchment and on doing the best possible with fewer resources. CIOs must seek budget predictability in an IT world that is very unpredictable. That expertise will gain trust from and build partnerships with other senior executive leaders. CIOs need to continue to embrace the excitement and magic that comes with information technology, but finding the right justification for funding will be a challenge in the visible horizon.

**Critical questions for Funding IT include the following:**

- Is the IT organization using multi-year budgets to demonstrate the future (e.g., five-year) budget impact of technology decisions made today?
- Is the IT organization clearly showing the campus the true cost of technology decisions?
- Is the IT organization successfully demonstrating the added value of
Several survey issues rising to the level of strategic importance may bear on the issue of Administrative/ERP/Information Systems. One is the migration of current web-based ERP systems to the mobile application environment. This year, Mobile Technologies ranked #1 for all institutions in the potential to become more significant, and the importance of ERP functionality on mobile devices is getting quite a bit of attention. Also gaining interest among CIOs are opportunities for alternative IT sourcing, including the use of community-source products, options for off-site hosting, and the outsourcing of entire application suites.

Critical questions for Administrative/ERP/Information Systems include the following:

- How will the institution manage the high and ongoing costs of maintenance contracts: will the institution continue contracts with primary vendors, or will it seek third-party maintenance contracts?
- How will the institution manage the costs and staff resource demands of continuing ERP-upgrade cycles?
- How will the institution evaluate SaaS models if/as they proliferate? Will these models prove secure while still supporting institutional differentiation?
- How viable are community-source products, and will the institution select these suites?
- In the current, extremely tight fiscal environment, can CIOs demonstrate the ROI for purchasing new systems and for continuing investments in upgrades? Can CIOs prove ROI based on use of data for predictive analysis? Is business intelligence the “real win” achieved from ERP implementations?
- Should LMS systems be considered ERP systems and thus supported by administrative computing staff?

ISSUE #3
Teaching and Learning with Technology

Not surprisingly, the strategic importance of Teaching and Learning with Technology has been steadily increasing in the Current Issues Surveys over the past several years. What is more revealing is that in 2011, Teaching and Learning with Technology rose to the top-three issues and was ranked higher than Security for the first time. This rise in strategic importance is evidence that technology has moved beyond the data center and institutional administrative systems and is now part of daily life for faculty and students. If you look into classrooms, offices, or libraries at any higher education institution and watch students as they move about campus, you will observe technology in practical use every day. Off campus as well, the number of courses taught online and in blended technology-mediated modes continues to increase.

For CIOs and other IT leaders, this ubiquitous use of instructional technology poses a challenge that will most likely escalate in the foreseeable future as new and emerging tools for teaching and learning evolve. Indeed, the 2011 Current Issues Survey ranked Teaching and Learning with Technology as one of the top-three issues that has the potential to become more

ISSUE #2
Administrative/ERP/Information Systems

In the 2011 survey, Administrative/ERP/Information Systems continued to receive high rankings in the areas of strategic importance, consumption of the CIO's time, and expenditure of financial and human resources, yet it ranked lower in potential to become more significant. Additionally, the survey indicated that this topic is of decreasing strategic importance as the size of the institution decreases. But what we do not know is how respondents ranked this topic based on whether they have completed an ERP implementation, are in the midst of an implementation, or are determining their future direction. This “maturity” level may be a major factor in ranking the strategic importance of ERP systems.

A question for CIOs is: given that ERP systems are costly and strategic, should and can we continue to devote such high levels of resources to this issue? Higher education institutions’ primary goals are focused on achieving academic excellence, producing learning outcomes, competing in the global world, and successfully retaining and graduating students. How can ERP systems contribute to these goals, and more important, given the costs, how can IT leaders ensure that ERP systems will support and improve these core institutional goals? The long-term strategic value of these systems may hold their potential to positively impact the academic enterprise.
significant. The impact on the budget was noted in the survey as well, with Teaching and Learning with Technology ranking fifth as an issue that consumes financial resources.

On the other hand, Teaching and Learning with Technology does not appear on the top ten list of issues that consume the CIO’s time. If this is because of the ease of use of the technology tools, this is a good sign. To be effective in delivering instruction and promoting learning, technology tools need to be integrated and sustained without major adoption, training, and support challenges. Lecture capture, smart classrooms, response clickers, and tablet computers are some examples of technologies that have become more popular, more user-friendly, and increasingly seamless. E-portfolios are also becoming mainstream and integrated into course management systems and web applications. Increasingly, the demand for mobile access to an institution’s web-based services, instructional content, and e-collaboration tools is driving institutions’ technology plans.

Critical questions for Teaching and Learning with Technology include the following:

- What are the best ways to collaborate with the institution’s stakeholders to create integrated, scalable, and sustainable models and infrastructure for technology to support teaching and learning?
- How will the institution keep up with the demand for 24/7 and mobile access to web-based instructional and student services?

ISSUE #4 Security

Security continues its long run near the top of the Current Issues Survey, coming in at #4 on the “strategic importance” list. For the past six years, Security has appeared at #1 or #2 on the “potential to become more significant in the coming year” list. This perennial “big and getting bigger” status implies that we still haven’t seen the whole scope of either the challenge or the solution.

The security arms race continues, with hackers repeatedly finding ways to defeat the best technical, organizational, and social countermeasures created by security experts. We are seeing new exploits that automated intrusion detection fails to recognize, malware that is difficult to remove, and whole new waves of risk associated with the rapid deployment of smartphones and the new generation of tablets on institutional networks. We are drawn, both institutionally and individually, to cloud computing and other alternative sourcing arrangements with new and poorly understood security characteristics.

Large releases of personally identifiable information (PII) and their aftermath continue to be regular features of the landscape for educational institutions. Institutional leaders, faculty, staff, students, parents, politicians, donors, and taxpayers all demand, quite understandably, to know how educational institutions are going to address the problem. News coverage of these breaches brings both challenges and, oddly, a bit of help: on the one hand, the coverage raises expectations among our users for security and privacy efforts; on the other hand, the constant exposure makes it easier to raise campus awareness of the risks involved with inaction.

Annie I. Antón, in her keynote address at the 2010 EDUCAUSE Security Professionals Conference (http://www.educause.edu/Resources/ChangingMindSetsinAcademiaHowI/203159), called privacy a “Grand Challenge,” a fundamental problem with broad societal impact. She encouraged information security officers to partner with their faculty, leveraging faculty expertise and research to make real progress. All of us in higher education will need to be creative and seek help to address this challenge.

Critical questions for Security include the following:

- Does the institution have an integrated security and privacy strategy with meaningful support at the highest levels? Is there a person or office clearly recognized as accountable for security and privacy strategy and implementation?
- Does the institution have a comprehensive communications plan for spreading the word about what is being done and for involving community members (e.g., academic, financial, procurement, legal, law enforcement, medical, student) as partners in the solutions?
- Does the institution have a risk-based approach to evaluating threats and prioritizing investments in mitigation? Does it have an appropriate governance structure for balancing the demands of security and privacy against the other, very real imperatives faced by leadership?
Does the institution have a formal, auditable approach to evaluating and mitigating risk introduced by externally sourced IT services? Does it have a methodology for revealing and addressing the new concerns that will arise in the move from internal to external provisioning?

**ISSUE #5  
Mobile Technologies**

Perhaps no other concept in the higher education IT space has evolved more rapidly than mobility. In previous EDUCAUSE Current Issues surveys and reports, Mobile Technologies was subsumed in other issues, such as Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness or Infrastructure. But considering the swift pace of change related to mobility, the Current Issues Committee felt strongly that Mobile Technologies should be considered independently of other issues. Survey respondents apparently agreed, ranking Mobile Technologies #5 this year. It also ranked highest as the issue most likely to become much more significant in the coming year.

Not that long ago, supporting mobile technologies simply meant providing a wireless network and putting laptop computers in the hands of those unique users who might benefit. Most recently, the consumerization of technology has forever changed the landscape of our technological environment and the needs and expectations of all users. Seemingly overnight, the phrase “There’s an app for that!” went from being a catchy slogan to a cliché.

From a planning perspective, CIOs should assume that the entire user community will require support for one or more mobile devices. For many institutions, that is already the case. Smartphone adoption is on the rise, with college students accounting for the fastest-growing market segment. The success of Apple’s iPad has led to the reinvention of the tablet computer, with significant competition entering the market this year. Mobile technologies promise to change the way users interact with resources and applications, moving services away from desktop and laptop computers to devices that increasingly embody a convergence of formerly disparate functions.

Although mobile technologies may sometimes appear to be just the latest tidal wave poised to sweep over an institution and its IT organization, they also present unique and powerful opportunities to advance the educational enterprise. Mobile technologies have the potential to transform instruction, in the classroom and remotely, by providing unprecedented access to educational resources anytime, anywhere. Institutional effectiveness will most certainly be improved by convenient access to services and data from a user’s device of choice. Communication among all institutional stakeholders is destined to be enhanced by customizable and coordinated applications literally in the palm of a user’s hand.

In many respects, the “pilot” phase of mobile technologies is over. Now is the time to make important decisions about how they will be incorporated into an effective IT program. Regardless of how mobile technologies fit within an institution’s strategic approach to supporting the enterprise, one thing is clear: those institutions with a well-defined strategy for exploiting mobile technologies will discover significant advantages.

Critical questions for Mobile Technologies include the following:

- Has the institution developed a strategic direction for supporting mobile technologies?
- Is the institutional infrastructure adequately robust and flexible to accommodate the inevitable and rapid influx of diverse mobile devices from which users will expect to connect to network resources?
- Does the institution’s security strategy address access to sensitive systems and data by mobile devices, including the storage of sensitive data on those devices?
- To what extent is the IT organization prepared to support the growing number and variety of mobile technology devices and uses?
- How can the content delivered by the institution’s information systems be adapted for effective utilization on mobile devices?

**ISSUE #6  
Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness**

This year, Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness is rated as even more essential to campus IT operations, moving up from the #7 slot last year. Institutions of higher education, along with their IT organizations, need to be able to react quickly with effective solutions for changing conditions in today’s environment of reduced funding and growing demand by students, administrators, faculty, and community users. For example, this past year saw the introduction of iPads and increases in the use of smartphones, e-book readers, and other consumer technologies. More than ever before, students are expecting campus IT operations to accept and adopt the new and emerging technologies that have already made services and applications convenient for them.
In the not-so-distant past, persuading students to use campus-based e-mail was often challenging for the IT organization. Now, with cloud-based computing e-mail systems, institutions are readily adopting e-mail and a wide host of services and applications that they do not physically manage. IT organizations must change traditional computer services as users’ demands change. Faculty and students are coming to campus expecting technical services such as wireless, remote smartphone syncing, online classes, and increased text-messaging capability. They also expect everything to work seamlessly.

These 21st-century technological innovations have given campus IT organizations the proverbial slap in the face: IT organizations must keep up-to-date, be viable, and remain competitive. That is, campus IT organizations must rediscover that technological change requires—no, it demands—flexibility, openness, adaptability, and continuous innovation. Technological change and decision-making do not start and stop with senior administrative leaders. Quite the contrary: IT leaders must be included in the decision-making process as early as possible. The IT leaders’ role should be one of seeking—rather than prescribing—solutions. When IT leaders are included early in technology-oriented discussions, their expertise, insight, calculations, and projections set the stage for effective solutions that address users’ genuine needs. By being proactively engaged in the institution’s strategic planning process and the planning for information technology, IT leaders can be instrumental and indispensable in helping to avoid the conflicts and confusion that arise when departments plan as silos. No longer relegated to the role of support services, IT organizations can move to the front of the class and serve as change agents in effectively communicating technological initiatives, changes, and innovations to the campus community.

Critical questions for Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness include the following:

- At what point in the decision-making process are IT leaders brought into the discussion? Are institutional and IT leaders aware of what is shared IT governance? Do they know the models that make for effective, evidence-based decision-making?
- Are IT leaders making an effort to be creative, innovative, and, possibly, risk-taking? What guides their decision-making process? Where do they derive their knowledge and justification for technological change and innovation?
- How does the IT organization foster a climate in which change is not an option but is rather an expectation, a way of professional life?
- With state funding plummeting, services being cut, and employees being furloughed, how is the IT organization doing more with less? How is it responding to these financial challenges while managing to maintain operations and keep current with technology?

### ISSUE #7

**Governance, Portfolio/Project Management**

This year, the Current Issues Committee collapsed the issues of Governance and Portfolio/Project Management into one. In its new form, this continues to be a top-ten issue, ranking #7 in strategic importance and #4 in terms of consuming the CIO’s time. Indeed, according to the “Key Findings” for a 2008 EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) survey: “Most respondents said that IT governance at their institutions stood at low to moderate levels of maturity.” This fact, combined with the challenges inherent in the top-six IT issues of strategic importance, means that Governance, Portfolio/Project Management will likely remain a top-ten issue in the future. It appears to be most important in large institutions, where it is ranked #2 in strategic importance and #1 in consuming the CIO’s time.

All institutions need a strong IT governance model or “structure and process of authoritative decision making across issues that are significant for external as well as internal stakeholders.” A mark of authoritative decisions is that they are well understood and widely accepted. As CIOs lead institutions toward good IT decision-making, they will need to both demonstrate excellent decision-making skills and support good decision-making throughout the organization. With the increased use of cloud providers (perhaps leading some to wonder “who needs a central IT organization?”), CIOs will need to engage partners and help them understand that the factors involved in an IT decision will not change much whether it is the CIO who makes a particular IT decision or someone else.

Good governance will require sober prioritization and a willingness to scrutinize all projects in order to determine an optimal mix and sequencing of proposed projects. A remaining question is whether institutions should adopt project/ portfolio-management software to aid in this process.

Critical questions for Governance, Portfolio/Project Management include the following:

- Has the institution settled on a governance model? Are both the structure and the process clear? Do stakeholders understand and use the governance model?
- If the CIO is not the final decision-maker for a given decision, is the CIO’s role in the decision clear?
- As cloud-based options become available, or even become the only option offered by some vendors, how will the institution manage decision-making? Who will review SaaS contracts?
- Agility/Adaptability/Responsiveness was ranked higher in strategic importance than governance. Does the governance model support or impede agility, adaptability, and responsiveness?
Infrastructure/Cyberinfrastructure

As services spread out to the cloud, and as institutions rely more on their internal networks for access to on-site and off-site services, campus IT connectivity and integration—that is, the infrastructure/cyberinfrastructure—continues to be of strategic importance. The connection to the Internet is used not just for access to external services unaffiliated with the institution but also for critical cloud-based campus services such as e-mail, learning management systems, ERP, and other administrative functions. Even though many institutions are seeing cost savings by moving services to the cloud, the one thing that cannot be moved is the connectivity itself. These connections are in constant need of upgrades, and many institutions are dealing with cabling plants that are reaching the end of their functional lifetimes, such as Category 5 twisted-pair cabling and multimode fiber optics or any cabling more than fifteen years old. Furthermore, the increasing consumerization of technology means that students are bringing multiple devices to campus (e.g., laptop, tablet, smartphone, gaming console) and are expecting all of those devices to be connected to a ubiquitous, fast, and reliable network, both wired and wireless. As some institutions are beginning to pull out of their recent financial troubles or are learning to budget within their new landscape of austerity, investment in critical infrastructure and cyberinfrastructure will be seen as either a welcome new expense or an essential ongoing one, and stalled projects will begin to move forward again out of the necessity to face the above challenges.

Institutions are increasingly being asked to ensure network security and may be challenged to invest in software and hardware to improve end-to-end security and monitoring, a challenge complicated by the increased usage of 4G carrier networks on campus and the corresponding loss of local control.

Educating constituents and administrators on what is possible, and on the differences between on-site and carrier networks, may be necessary to articulate service commitments.

Critical questions for Infrastructure/Cyberinfrastructure include the following:
Does the institution have the ability to monitor usage of the internal campus network, the Internet connection, and wireless coverage, to ensure that customers' needs are being met and that the institution is ready for planned capacity and performance upgrades?

Does the institution have a network security policy that informs the selection of hardware and software and allows the IT organization to prioritize network projects that affect network security?

Can the institution identify network applications and devices such as smartphones, set-top boxes, and other services that will make new demands on campus networks and affect planning and performance?

What service-level agreements does the institution have for network performance and reliability, and are the necessary resources available to provide that level of service?

How can the institution plan and integrate carrier wireless networks into the network planning? Can the need for institution-delivered connectivity be reduced by the use of carrier wireless or other services?

### ISSUE #9
**Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity**

Ongoing domestic and international disasters have generated a series of lessons for first-response and emergency preparedness. Thus it’s not surprising that Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity (DR/BC) has remained in the top-10 list of strategic concerns since 2006.

The results of this year’s survey reveal differences by size and type of institution. DR/BC was ranked 9 as a strategic concern among all institutions, but the issue was of most importance to medium-sized institutions. Likewise, DR/BC was more significant to public institutions than to private institutions.

All campuses need to maintain or restore business and academic services when circumstances disrupt normal operations. Business continuity encompasses disaster recovery—the activities that restore the institution to an acceptable condition after a disaster—but also includes activities such as risk and impact assessment, prioritization of business processes, and restoring operations to a “new normal” after an event. The core of the concept is a collaborative and integrated approach in which every department understands and prepares for the role it will play in keeping the institution functional in a crisis and viable in the long run.

Even if there is never a disaster to address on campus, business-continuity planning requires that key stakeholders work together to assess risk and prioritize work. Planning develops understandings across campus units, builds relationships, and fosters confidence. The process of planning may also reveal weaknesses in current processes or systems. Addressing these weaknesses can improve campus operations on a day-to-day basis—a potential “selling point” for business-continuity planning on campus.

As we move into the next decade, it isn’t the level of planning for DR/BC but rather the quality of these efforts that will distinguish commitments among various types of institutions.

Critical questions for Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity include the following:

- Does responsibility for DR/BC planning involve more than the IT organization?
- In addition to plans and checklists, does the IT organization conduct periodic tests or drills involving various members of the campus community?
- Does DR/BC planning include agreements with local government and public safety officials?
- For reasons of economy, some colleges and universities have developed reciprocal agreements for the provision of DR/BC services. Is the institution aware of the pros and cons of such agreements?
- Does DR/BC planning include ongoing risk assessment and training?
- Does the campus have a solid incident-response plan?
- Does upper administration understand the risks of not being prepared: the damage to the institution’s reputation, the loss of students, and the costs of being in a reactive mode?
- Is DR/BC infused in everyday process and procedure across campus—in systems and building design, teaching and learning, research data, all operations?

### ISSUE #10
**Strategic Planning**

IT leaders appear to have a fickle relationship with the issue of Strategic Planning. Over the past five years, Strategic Planning moved steadily down the list of top-ten issues of strategic importance and dropped off the list entirely by 2008, only to reappear last year as issue #9. Although its listing this year as #10 may reflect a slight lessening of concern, IT leaders remain cognizant that strategic planning has a critical role to play in effective IT service delivery.

Discussions about the value of strategic planning frequently arise among IT professionals at conferences, on listserves, and in industry publications. IT leaders understand that aligning resources to enable the IT organization to serve the campus mission and to support business needs is essential to demonstrating the value of information technology. Yet the strategic planning process—as well as the extent to which an institution adopts and executes strategic planning processes—is often outside the scope of the IT organization. As a result, the ability of IT leaders to leverage strategic planning processes is often a function of the campus culture.

Even though IT leaders may not always be able to adopt a pure approach to
the IT organization to secure broad campus input to help define and plan for project priorities? Or must the IT organization react to a shifting set of business needs and executive requests?

- Is the IT organization able to anticipate the shifting IT landscape two or three years down the road and align current, tactical efforts in that direction?

- Does the IT organization have a process for realigning itself to adjust to changing institutional priorities?

### Conclusion

Understanding the significance of the IT issues in the 2011 EDUCAUSE Current Issues Survey is critical to effective oversight and provisioning of campus IT resources. In addition to considering the on-campus impact of the top-ten issues critical for strategic success, IT leaders must also take into account off-campus perspectives that reflect the fundamental crossroads at which higher education and information technology find themselves.

For higher education, traditional revenue and costing models no longer scale, and conventional models of course delivery are being challenged. For IT organizations, the meteoric rise of technologies such as cloud and mobile computing challenge many long-held assumptions about what, how, and who should deliver campus IT service portfolios.

Indeed, Mark P. McDonald, group vice president at Gartner, believes the time has come to deconstruct and re-examine much of what we believe about information technology: the strategic role, organization, personnel skills, and processes.

To survive, and display real value to institutions, IT organizations must cast aside past practices and must determine new ways to exhibit strategic alignment, adapt to changing IT paradigms, and transform themselves with agile approaches to technology.

### Notes

1. Of the 1,917 EDUCAUSE primary member representatives who received an e-mail invitation to complete the survey, 320 (17%) responded.

2. Complete details of the 2011 Current Issues Survey are published online. See the EDUCAUSE 2011 Current Issues website (http://www.educause.edu/2011IssuesResources/).


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