

**Advancing Campus Efficiencies: A Companion for Campus Leaders in the Digital Era**

Sally M. Johnstone and WCET Associates  
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Reviewed by Mara Hancock

In *Advancing Campus Efficiencies: A Companion for Campus Leaders in the Digital Era*, Sally M. Johnstone and her WCET colleagues begin a rich conversation on a diverse set of economic, political, and cultural drivers that require a new, more efficient, and more effective way of planning and implementing IT services in higher education. Masterfully interwoven into the discussion of these drivers is an excellent set of essays and use cases contributed by a wide range of leaders in higher education. These essays reveal the diverse ways in which higher education and its supporting ecosystem of research organizations, commercial vendors, and funding organizations are evolving to address issues that will ultimately require transformative change in our institutional culture and services. Johnstone approaches technology as a means to an end and frames this perspective immediately in her introduction, making the book accessible and applicable to campus leaders both inside and outside IT organizations.

Johnstone sets the stage in the first two chapters, introducing several overarching and critical issues facing higher education today:

- There is an increasing demand for higher education from a larger number of high school students expecting to go to college and from a growing set of lifelong learners.
- Rapid technological advances have shifted the expectations of students and faculty, who anticipate greater access to campus services, IT support, and instructors or colleagues through personalized web-based interfaces 24 × 7.

- Traditional four-year universities face increased competition from non-traditional degree-granting institutions that are business-centered, profit-driven, and less encumbered by the physical infrastructure costs of most residential colleges.
- Less money is available from state and federal budgets to support higher education at the same time that demand is increasing for institutional accountability for consumers (students and parents) and the government.

Throughout the book, Johnstone and her associates explore these issues and encourage creative thinking about how technology can contribute to the efficient transformation of the academy to improve teaching, learning, and the campus experience for more people regardless of their age or locale: life-long learning for anyone, anywhere, at any time.

After introducing the critical issues, the authors concretize the discussion as they define potential strategies for analyzing project efficiencies. The Technology Costing Methodology (TCM) is introduced as an effective way to apply activity-based costing to IT projects. The authors highlight the difference between analyzing cost *efficiency* and cost *effectiveness*, noting that although the two terms are often used interchangeably, each can represent a discrete set of goals or metrics for success.

Several essays document effective implementations of TCM. One notable essay, from Marianne Boeke and Dennis Jones, suggests prioritizing the redesign of large-enrollment courses as an effective way to quickly show efficiency and cost effectiveness in technology-intensive courses. They state that the keys to this approach are to:

- Plan and develop once while impacting many, bringing down the technology cost per student (efficiency).
- Create the opportunity for increased student interaction in an environment

that often has few opportunities for them to engage (effectiveness).

- Draw from a variety of skills and services across campus to support course development and maintenance (efficiency and effectiveness).

A TCM pilot at Washington State University also highlights the importance of planning and design by demonstrating that the costs of development are inversely proportional to the amount of time invested in design. Patricia Shea repeats this sentiment in Chapter 3:

Unfortunately, some campuses are taking the fast, easy, but not very effective route of simply "web-inizing" current face-to-face practices. Others, however, are taking time to assess the needs of all the students they serve, rethinking what services they want to deliver, and developing multiple, integrated ways to deliver them.

*Advancing Campus Efficiencies* hits its stride as it begins to explore transformational and creative solutions in the essays embedded in Chapters 3–7. Adhering to an orderly format, the book toggles between the author's contextualization of the larger issues and contributors' essays, using existing projects to illuminate the ideas.

- *Student Services (Chapter 3: Student Service Rethought for All Students)*

By prioritizing students and learning from the technology and services they consume before they arrive on campus, institutions can begin to create services that break down administrative barriers and focus on the individualized needs of each student. Some examples include one-stop service centers both online and on campus, centralized help desks, online learning plans and advising services, and the development of online learning communities that offer communities of practice and tutoring extending beyond the boundaries of a course.

■ *Faculty roles (Chapter 4: How Can We Help the Faculty?)*

Work overload is an oft-cited barrier to faculty adoption of new technology-supported learning models. This chapter posits that it is time for a radical rethinking of faculty roles. A new, more collaborative model must emerge in which teams of skilled staff (including instructional designers, teaching staff, faculty, media specialists, and educational technologists) work to provide “the most exceptional learning environment possible.” This transition will be hastened by the cultural shift in which a new generation of young faculty—which the author terms the “we generation”—enjoys working in cross-disciplinary and collaborative teams rather than in the solitude of their offices or labs.

■ *Institutional accountability (Chapter 5: Accountability and Ensuring Quality)*

Cliff Adelman of the U.S. Department of Education notes that nearly 60 percent of undergraduates attend more than one institution. As students become more active and mobile consumers of education, universities are increasingly asked to account for academic and administrative effectiveness. When students carry credits between institutions, these credits need to reflect real and specific competencies. Given the scale of this issue, it likely means that competency-based assessment will require professors and programs to articulate more defined learning objectives.

In this light, it is even more important to express the impact that technology can have in enabling this type of activity. Using the Integrated Technology Strategy from California State University (CSU) as an example, the authors promote system-wide collaboration and the development of core principles by which to voice clear

criteria and establish project priorities at a high level.

■ *Building Partnerships (Chapter 6: Joining Others: Lessons for Consortial Relationships)*

Doing more with less is a tough proposition. Partnering across universities can be a positive way to stretch limited resources to accomplish more. The book cites examples of new consortial efforts, such as CSU’s top-down intra-system style or the inter-university style of the MERLOT project and the grassroots Open Educational Resources (OER) movement. The authors leave a large and notable gap in this chapter, however, by not talking about the increasingly sizable community involved in open source projects such as Sakai, Moodle, or uPortal.

■ *Looking toward the future (Chapter 7: Putting it All Together)*

Well-known visionaries such as David Wiley and Ellen Wagner add their voices to the conversation about the future in the final chapter. David Wiley points toward global changes that are leading us to an open and mobile digital environment that allows for a more personalized, participatory, and connected culture. He challenges higher education leaders to appropriate these issues as our own to maintain the relevancy of higher education. OER projects such as MIT’s OpenCourseWare or the MERLOT project, as well as Larry Lessig’s Creative Commons, help extend the efforts of faculty and their supporting teams in promoting the open sharing of educational materials.

*Advancing Campus Efficiencies* is a timely book for campus leaders wanting to understand the critical issues currently facing higher education. It opens the door to new avenues of thinking and explores a variety of activities that leaders can deploy to help their institutions address these challenges. *C*

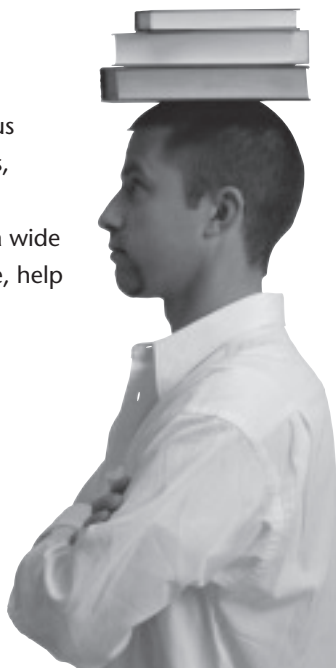
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