

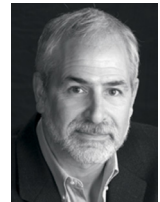


Article Series on Learning Impact

Effective Instructional Innovation: How IT Gets There from Here!

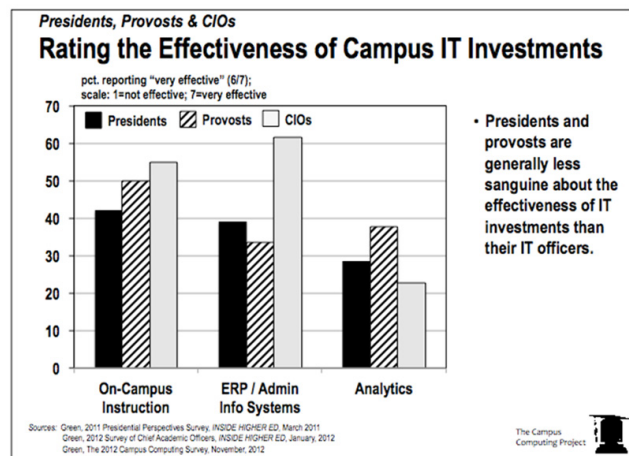
A Conversation with Kenneth C. Green of The Campus Computing Project

Casey Green, founding director of *The Campus Computing Project*, will lead an all-day workshop at *Learning Impact 2013*, May 13-16, on *Effective Instructional Innovation: How IT Gets There from Here!* The workshop will explore IT effectiveness in context of both a supporting infrastructure and also as reflection of institutional culture and a commitment to change – a willingness among campus officials to leverage technology as a catalyst for change to enable instructional innovation. IMS talked with Green ahead of the May conference.



Although colleges and universities continue to make significant investments in information technology to support both instruction and campus operations, a significant proportion of presidents, provosts, and even CIOs do not rate these investments as “very effective.” That’s the message that emerges from three recent national surveys of senior campus officials conducted by Kenneth C. Green, founding director of The Campus Computing Project, the nation’s largest continuing study of the role of eLearning and information technology in American higher education.

“It pains me to say this, but I don’t think IT leaders have done a good job of conveying the value and effectiveness of campus IT investments to their presidents, provosts, and others on campus,” said Green. He adds that “similarly, presidents, and provosts have not done a good job of conveying the value of IT to off-campus audiences, including trustees and members of the state legislature.”



Green acknowledges the many roles of IT on campus, including the many – and rising – demands for IT resources and services that confront campus IT officials. “At one level,” says Green, “IT is an essential utility: support e-mail and the LMS, and make sure that the student information system and the LMS do not crash during rush. But at a second

level, the assumption of or quest for added-value has not been fulfilled: if we're honest with ourselves, we've not seen the expected gains in student learning and institutional productivity suggested by some campus IT leaders and campus IT advocates, and also often implied by campus IT providers."

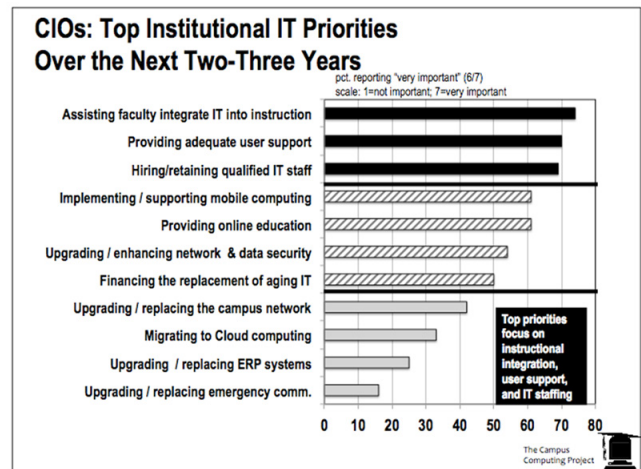
Adding to the challenges that confront campus IT officials are the high – and rising – expectations for campus IT resources and services fostered by the consumer experience: "our students, faculty, staff, and alumni do lots of IT-based activities off-campus and wonder why they cannot do similar things on-campus."

Green's recent national surveys of presidents, provosts, and CIOs provide evidence of the mixed assessment on IT effectiveness. Just half the presidents, a little more than 40 percent of provosts, and just over 50 percent of CIOs and senior campus IT officials rate the campus investment in IT to support instruction as "very effective." The numbers are lower (below 40 percent) for presidents and provosts when asked about IT to support administrative activities, even as larger proportion of CIOs (over 60 percent) view the campus investment in ERP and administrative systems as "very effective." And in the increasingly important realm of data and analytics, barely a fourth of CIOs, less than a third of presidents, and just under two-fifths of provosts view the current campus investments as "very effective."

"There is a clear need for a very candid conversation about the institutional goals for IT, on the instructional side and the operational side," says Green. "I'm not sure that many institutions have had this conversation recently." He noted that more than a decade ago, during the dot.com/dot.edu era, many campuses revised their strategic plans to highlight how technology would "transform Acme College." But there was often little in these institutional proclamations to "connect the dots" and to address the essential infrastructure and investment required to make technology a transforming resource. A

decade after the dot.com era, "it's clear that the consumer market experience has gotten ahead of the campus experience, and many on- and off-campus are asking when and how higher education will catch-up with effective resources and services that now seem ubiquitous off-campus."

Even as the percentage of institutions reporting IT budget cuts has declined in the past two years, Green notes ongoing internal competition for budget resources: "That's part of the challenge for IT leaders. There's no letup on demand. You can see from our data [from The Campus Computing Survey] that IT officers are trying to be strategic about where they spend and invest, cutting back in some areas while moving forward in others. Some examples include wireless and mobile technologies, which have become part of an entitlement mentality for campus technology users."



Green comments that campus spending to address IT security seems to have stabilized in recent years, as has emergency notification. However, he notes that emergency notification really was not on anybody's radar (or in campus budgets) until four years ago, following the campus shootings at Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois, and elsewhere. Looking forward, Green points to data from the fall 2012 Campus Computing Survey about how CIOs view their key campus priorities: "The 2012 survey reveals that the number one issue for senior campus

IT officers over the next two to three years is 'assisting faculty with the instructional integration of information technology.' This harkens back to questions we asked in 1986 – how do we get faculty to use computers, and again in 1996 – how do we help faculty leverage the power and potential of the Internet in instruction? The questions have changed a bit, but the underlying issues and answers are similar: training, user support, evidence of impact and benefits, and faculty recognition and reward.”

According to data collected by Campus Computing for INSIDE HIGHER ED, more than three-fourths of college and university presidents believe online education courses and programs offer an effective way for their institutions to serve more learners. And while there is a rich array of content available online, Green reports that a large part of the problem is that huge portions of what might be very useful digital instructional content – ranging from video clips to simulations to free OER (Open Education Resource) textbooks are not curated or catalogued in an accessible, useful, or efficient manner. “There is potentially great stuff in lots of digital nooks. The problem is that there is no map for the nooks, no analog to YELP for the digital content and

instructional resources developed by many faculty for their classes.”

Faculty are often reluctant to incorporate the use of technology in their teaching because the outcomes are so ambiguous. “Our data from Campus Computing suggest that most campuses are not engaged in an ongoing assessment of their IT investments on the academic side. We continue to do a lot of ad hoc stuff. Too much of what we do in higher education is based on opinion and epiphany. And the clear assessment of presidents and provosts is that colleges and universities don't make effective use of data for decision-making. That assessment applies as much to teaching and instruction as it does the operational and managerial realm of colleges and universities.”

Green agrees that there is a continuing need for interoperability standards, and that major publishers as well as smaller or independent developers would be wise to use organizations like IMS Global Learning to promote and validate those standards. The challenge increasingly will be to make individual application and content providers, as well as users, aware of the benefits of these standards and should ensure that their contributions comply.

About IMS Global Learning Consortium

IMS Global is a nonprofit organization that advances technology that can affordably scale and improve educational participation and attainment. IMS members are leading suppliers, institutions and government organizations that are enabling the future of education by collaborating on interoperability and adoption initiatives. IMS sponsors Learning Impact: A global awards program and conference to recognize the impact of innovative technology on educational access, affordability, and quality. For more information visit www.imsglobal.org or contact info@imsglobal.org.

Citation To reference this article please cite: Humes, L. R. (2013). *Effective Instructional Innovation: How IT Gets There from Here!* IMS Global Learning Consortium Series on Learning Impact. May 2013 from <http://www.imsglobal.org/articles/SLI06-052013.pdf>

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