“Guiding principles” are how we want to operate; “goals” are what targets we want to set; “strategies” are how we accomplish the goals.

These principles should guide every IT decision-maker on campus. NC State’s cyberinfrastructure community consists of those who are involved with the IT governance process, as well as staff members who provide the university’s cyberinfrastructure — hardware, software, IT services and support.

As a large, comprehensive Research I university, NC State is organizationally and technologically complex, with both centralized and college/departmental IT units that provide support for enterprise and specialized services in order to support the teaching, research and service mission of the university.

IT at the university should be a partnership, leveraging both centralized and localized resources to meet the strategic goals of the university, and requiring discussions that ensure the optimal use of limited IT resources.

In collaboratively and efficiently serving the campus community, IT decision-makers are often asked to balance seemingly conflicting requirements; e.g., innovation vs. stability, standardization vs. autonomy, openness vs. security, consensus vs. efficiency in decision making, centralized vs. distributed services, and proprietary vs. open source possibilities. Embracing our guiding principles and striving to meet our goals, the IT community will endeavor to balance these needs through our IT governance processes.

1. Alignment: Our IT decisions will align with NC State’s strategic plan.

NC State’s strategic plan includes its priorities, vision and goals surrounding its core missions of teaching, research and public outreach.

Alignment with university priorities is a fundamental facet of this and any IT strategic plan and the decisions based upon it. The plan provides decision-makers, particularly those in IT, with the opportunity to pause and evaluate whether the decisions being made will advance the university’s priorities.

2. Resources: We will allocate campus cyberinfrastructure resources based on providing the greatest value and benefit for the NC State community.

Campus cyberinfrastructure — hardware, software, IT services and support — represents resources for campus stakeholders, and it must be allocated and reallocated wisely and efficiently to leverage its benefits for the individual and the community.

The principle of resource allocation needs to have its own focus and strength to be balanced against
the other principles. The reallocation of university-wide resources should be part of the overall campus decision process. In most industries, targeted IT funding improves efficiency and effectiveness. Many IT projects take more than 12 months and cross fiscal boundaries, thus funding allocation needs to account for this broader need.

3. User Focus: User needs will be a key component in all IT decisions.
We will anticipate and respond to user needs, seek input, and aspire to the usability and ubiquity of essential services. We will meet the information technology needs of stakeholders through a balance of centralized and unit-level cyberinfrastructure, actively and regularly seeking input from users. IT training and support will be made widely available to the entire NC State community.

4. Collaboration: We will work within and across organizational structures to meet strategic goals and identify opportunities for innovation and improvement.
Solving strategic problems and making IT decisions cannot be done in isolation, as the impacts of decisions have far-reaching effects. Achieving strategic goals requires creative problem-solving across myriad stakeholder groups. Collaboration provides opportunities to benefit from diverse viewpoints and draw from multiple resource bases to address critical needs.

5. Transparency: We will be transparent in our decision-making and resource use.
Significant IT decisions should be made via established governance processes in a manner that solicits input from relevant stakeholders, as transparent processes will lead to better acceptance of decisions and improved outcomes.

The IT community should communicate with campus stakeholders about impacts of IT decisions and campus stakeholders should consult with the IT community concerning current performance and anticipated needs.

6. Innovation: We will value innovative and creative thinking.
The IT community will encourage and support development and acquisition of innovative IT services that enhance teaching, research and outreach. It is valuable for the organization to support innovative and creative thinking at all levels. We should promote a culture of innovative thinking, seeking focused IT solutions to solve identified problems purposefully and to enhance organizational excellence. Both broader and more targeted thinking are important. Nimbleness and rapid prototyping are important and valued components of innovation.

7. Data Stewardship: We will provide a secure but accessible data environment.
The university’s IT environment must be stable, resilient and secure for all data and intellectual property of students, faculty, staff and collaborators of the University. Simultaneously, accurate, usable information and data should be available as appropriate to each user in a timely fashion. Providing this environment while maintaining compliance with applicable laws and regulations is a shared responsibility.

8. IT Knowledge and Skills: We will value technology skills development for the IT community.
Currency of knowledge and skills is critical to the IT community’s effectiveness in supporting students, faculty, staff and other NC State stakeholders. NC State’s organizational culture will recognize the value of a well-supported, enabled and empowered staff.