WHAT IS ITIL: IS IT APPLICABLE TO IT IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Most institutions today are completely reliant on email, Microsoft Office applications, employee share drives, Enterprise Relational Database programs (i.e. Banner), and other basic IT infrastructure applications and services in order to do their business. If any of these systems go off-line, the productivity of the organization is negatively impacted.

However, many of the IT support models for these critical applications and services are the result of sporadic growth, acquisitions, or adding new support tools and personnel only when introducing new technology. Few campus IT installations today are the result of a "big picture" IT infrastructure approach. Instead, they are fragmented groups that often do not communicate well with each other, leading to repetitive systems and support models that do not respond quickly or efficiently to change. The Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) was developed by the British government specifically to address these issues.

ITIL Framework

ITIL is focused on the IT organization and its personnel, not the business or production of products. This allows ITIL-compliant organizations to quickly integrate processes, procedures, and best practices for the benefit of business improvement. It is also non-proprietary, which makes it attractive to many institutions, including Worcester State University, which is at the initial stages of ITIL implementation. The basic framework has ten core processes grouped into two sets called Service Delivery and Service Support.

**Service Delivery** is the management of IT services (tactical), and involves a number of management practices to ensure that IT services are provided as agreed between the Service Provider and the User.

The five Service Delivery processes are:
1. Service Level Management
2. Capacity Management
3. Contingency Planning
4. Availability Management
5. Cost Management / IT Financial Management

**Service Support** is the practice of those processes (operational) that enable IT Services to be provided. Without these disciplines, it would be almost impossible to provide these IT Services, and at best in a very unmanaged and haphazard way.

The five Service Support processes are:
1. Configuration Management
2. Incident Management
3. Change Management
4. Problem management
5. Release Management

The primary business benefits of ITIL include:
- Reduced costs for delivering IT services through standardization
- Improved IT services, delivered using proven best practice processes
- Improved client satisfaction through a more professional approach to service delivery
- Consistency through standards and guidance
- Improved employee productivity, for both IT and business line employees