Our Goals

The goals of the Technology Solutions Subgroup are to

1) **enhance and support best practices**, as identified by the Best Practices Subgroup by **serving as technology liaison/advocate**;

2) identify areas where technology could help **streamline processes** and **increase efficiency** for Admissions operations under the new Student Services model as well as our postbac. office;

3) ensure that Admissions office operation personnel and IT support staff consensually agree on a specific work plan for the next 6-12 months that identifies the resources required and lines of responsibility for implementing both one-time technology products and processes stemming from goals #1 and #2 above, as well as meeting long-term needs for support and training to sustain these efforts;

4) ensure that by the end of our Student Services transition, there is a well-defined process in place for requesting, assessing and prioritizing technical development projects.

In an effort to meet these goals, we reviewed many of the technology-driven processes used by undergraduate, graduate, and postbac. program Admissions offices and attempted to identify more efficient workflow methods, more efficient data processing, and areas where universal technology solutions to shared tasks might be possible.

Our Recommendations

Our recommendations for the first two goals fall into the categories below. The group will address the second two goals in Phase II.

Online Solutions

- recommend enhancements to website to improve experience for all prospective students (both graduate and undergraduate)

*Examples:*

a) Hobson’s online Application:

1. Serve as a technical liaison to Hobson’s for the development of online graduate and postbac. program applications to reduce manual application data entry.
2. Data catalogue development
3. Image logos for web applications – propose a simplified Bryn Mawr seal and text image that can later be replaced by college and program-specific “branding logos”
4. Discussion of data migration to PeopleSoft, including timing of migration
5. Discussion of what reports can be generated in Hobson’s that are not generated in PeopleSoft—recommend migrating Hobson’s data to do as much processing and reporting through PeopleSoft as possible.

b) Virtual Bryn Mawr (self-service) - possibly recommend general improvements?

1. Investigate self service functionality for areas not currently using (e.g., postbac. may want to use an application checklist)
2. Review set up for different groups and suggest changes to make them usable for all programs.

c) Website improvements for Admissions (e.g., better navigation for graduate programs)

Data Integration

- Identification of “shadow systems” and recommendation re use of PeopleSoft.

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- pose questions to consultants re using PeopleSoft to replace these systems
- recommend where practices should be unique to each program and where using “shadow systems” is more efficient than PeopleSoft, given time and staffing constraints

Examples:

a) the postbac. program maintains a separate Filemaker Pro database to track and generate reports on the postbac. admissions process and the success of undergraduate alumnae and postbac. alumni in the medical and other health professional school admissions process.
b) GSAS uses Excel spreadsheet for tracking and reporting on fellowships and related awarded students’ academic progress.

Data Management

- Streamline and automate data entry wherever possible. Factors for assessment include processing volume, manual processing time saved, and whether automation would lead to more effective use of human resources
- Identify areas where manual data entry is more appropriate, and examine whether processing efficiency may be improved

Examples:

a) Undergrad application Supplement load: being developed by BMC I.T. staff to greatly reduce manual data entry
b) Upload Prospect data via “easy form”—custom panel or via upload from Excel or web form.
c) Investigate prospect data input at smaller PeopleSoft schools.

Reporting

- consult with Institutional Research and other offices to determine which data should be collected by all programs,
- identify and share queries and other reporting solutions among programs.
- identify areas where new reporting solutions may be needed

Communication

Communications options (including personalized group email)

Investigate:
- Communications with prospects for recruitment purposes
- Communication with applicants awaiting decisions
- Communication with accepted applicants
- Skype for recruiting and applicant interviews; for prospective students to speak to currently enrolled students, etc.
- On-line chats
- Facebook
- Communication with matriculated students prior to arrival on campus.

Example: The postbac program maintains a password protected web site containing essential information (math review materials, housing and relocation information, etc) for matriculated students. This information needs to be communicated to students prior to their ability to access Blackboard, thus the postbac program needs to maintain a separate web directory to make these materials available to the incoming students.

Imaging

- Recommend that individual offices defer this process until the College-wide assessment of imaging solutions is done.