

NEW Q-DROP FORM LAUNCHES ON SEPTEMBER 12: ACADEMIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

New Q-drop form launches on September 12 . As part of an ongoing effort to modernize student services, the Registrar's office and Academic Information Systems partnered to deliver a new form and workflow to manage Q-drops, which are requests students can make to withdraw from a class after the census date. This new form replaces approaches that varied by school and were largely manual. This new form standardizes the process and empowers students to make more decisions on their own. There are more than 5,000 Q-drop requests made each long semester. Coalescing these into a simple and direct request management system will make the process easier for all involved. We are piloting a tool called Kualu Build to support the new Q-drop form. Build is a form-building and workflow automation engine designed for higher education. Form and workflow editing happen through a drag-and-drop interface, allowing functional staff greater independence in form and workflow creation. Technical staff provide data and integrations to ensure those forms and workflows can consume and trigger sophisticated university information and processes. We started with Q-drops as a high-impact, high-complexity process for a first pilot and are now evaluating other ways that Build can automate campus processes without custom development.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FALL 2025 UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATIONS: ACADEMIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Resumption of standardized test score requirement and other enhancements for Fall 2025 undergraduate applications. To improve UT's ability to place admitted students in programs they would be most suited for and to identify students who might need extra help, the requirement to submit standardized test scores was reinstated for Fall 2025 applications, which opened on August 1, 2024. Academic Information Systems partnered with the Office of Admissions to implement this change as well as other application enhancements such as introducing an Early Action program, reducing the number of short answer questions, providing greater flexibility in topic choice for the required essay, narrowing the scope of letters of recommendation, and introducing a waitlist for applicants. By reinstating the standardized test score requirement, UT will be better able to place students in a major where they can succeed. The Early Action program will allow students who apply by October 15 to receive a decision by January 15, a full month before the regular decision date of February 15, giving applicants more time to consider which admissions offer to accept. The modifications in the short answer and essay portions of the application will allow students to highlight specific activities and topics of their choice. Changes to the letter of recommendation process encourage students to provide those letters from sources outside their high school, reducing the burden of this work on high school teachers and counselors. The new waitlist process will allow students who are not automatically admitted to their major of choice to receive a decision about their waitlist application by March 1. These changes were implemented on an extremely tight timeline since the new requirements and enhancements were confirmed by University leadership in March 2024. This required quick, coordinated work between AIS and the Office of Admissions to confirm requirements, document business rules, and implement and test changes to the admissions system so we could go live with the revised process on August 1.

CAMPUS NETWORK UTILIZATION: NETWORK AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The semester is in full swing and the campus network is being utilized more than ever before. On our wired network, we have had a total of 91,673 devices use the network. Their combined total connection time is 53,821,777 hours. That's 6,144 years! On our wireless networks, 288,288 unique devices have used the networks for a total of 24,120,953 hours or 2753 years. From a data volume perspective, we have had a total of 3.59 petabytes (4,043,850,646,577,726 bytes) come inbound to campus from the Internet and 1.4 petabytes (1,570,885,122,715,339 bytes) leave campus outbound to the Internet. Working with partners across campus the Enterprise Technology Networking team continues to work tirelessly to ensure the network is capable of supporting the mission of the university.

MIGRATION AND ONBOARDING: DATA CENTER & PHYSICAL SECURITY

As part of an ongoing effort to fully utilize the data center, a migration project has begun to onboard UTMB as our newest and largest regional customer in the data center. This migration will help lower the subsidy needed to run the data center, thus freeing up additional gen ops budget for the rest of Enterprise Technology. To date UDC staff completed electrical upgrades to the allocated UTMB cabinets, installed 76 new devices occupying 103RU of space and completed 3 life migrations of 31 devices occupying another 70RU of space. Wave 4 migration is scheduled for October 22nd and will be another 15 devices.

MODERNIZATION UT DIRECTORY: TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

UT Directory Modernization and Rewrite: The Web Consulting Services team has achieved an 80 percent benchmark progress in upgrading from the Perl "finger" interface which acts as relay to search person data on behalf of the Directory. This change will improve maintainability and performance by adopting a Python framework. The Directory advanced search feature received over 1.5 million views from within the UT community in the 2023-24 fiscal year.

MODERNIZATION ID CARD CENTER: TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

ID Card Modernization: The Web Consulting Services team has completed preliminary preparations to kick off the ID Card Modernization project, which has involved documenting current business practices, securing sponsorship, and locating cross-departmental resources. A proposal has been submitted. This effort will improve efficiency, shorten customer wait times, reduce technical debt, and move 80 percent or more functionality off of the Mainframe. The ID Center processes over 30,000 cards in a given year for members of the UT community.

ESTABLISHING THE DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY CENTER: TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

Establishing the Digital Accessibility Center: The DAC is finalizing a proposal for centralized funding to expand captioning services, retain the document remediation team, and build a web accessibility support team. The aim of the overall digital accessibility initiatives is to address accessibility issues raised in recent DOJ audits and comply with new Title II ADA regulations, which dictate a compliance deadline of April 2026 for any digital space a student can access. The DOJ team was pleased with the decision to create the DAC and house it in a centralized manner. However, considerable progress is needed. Within Canvas, 60-70% of courses do not meet accessibility requirements, mainly due to document inaccessibility. Captioning support was reduced in the Spring of 2021, resulting in a 46% drop in utilization. Minimal web accessibility support is currently available to support web or app developers. The DAC's mission is to provide equal access to all users of academic and public resources at The University of Texas, but it is underscored by the need to reach compliance across our digital landscape.

AWS CONNECT W/UHS: TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

AWS Connect w/UHS: The first AWS Connect queue called FDRO was delivered to UHS. They are using AWS Connect now and want to expand the services. This is the first of a total of four new queues they want setup. Each queue varies by call tree and complexity. By completing this effort inhouse, UHS will save ~\$30K in out-of-pocket expenses plus it grows UT's internal expertise. University Health Services asked for help in setting up additional AWS Connect queues.

GITHUB COPILOT POC: TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

GitHub Copilot POC: With a kickoff on 10/2/24, the POC will last 30 days and be funded by ET. A spreadsheet for success criteria has been started and will be reviewed with the POC participants along with deciding upon a 30 day timeframe. This is an effort that ~50 developers across campus have volunteered to participate in and is a great way to start a community of practice. The POC is the first step towards developing an AI strategy for our developer community.