Overview

ITS Project Prioritization provides HSU a framework and process for selecting new projects which best support the campus’ strategic interests and directions and provide it the most value. The intended results of the Project Prioritization process are to:

1. Build consensus on the most important information technology projects
2. Assure project alignment with HSU strategic objectives for IT project prioritization
3. Add transparency to the prioritization of ITS projects
4. Increase collaboration across the university
5. Improve the smooth flow of work for ITS staff

It also helps mitigate other challenges, such as:
1. Ad hoc requests that lack proper authorization, sponsorship, resource commitments, and funding.
2. “First come, first served” mindset
3. Staff spread thin among many competing projects
4. “Everything is a priority” which results in not delivering all requested projects on time.

Framework

Projects are measured against the campus' strategic objectives and its capabilities to undertake projects. The project prioritization process includes:

1. **Project scoring** – An overall weighted score is generated that represents the project’s value to the campus. The higher the score, the more value. The scoring is performed by the Project Prioritization Steering Committee. All projects are accepted.
2. **Funding availability** – Identify available funds to carry out the project, and location of those funds
3. **Resource capacity evaluation** – Identify which ITS and/or other department staff resources are available to work on the project.
4. **Project scheduling** – A project is scheduled based on its scoring, including funding, and resource capacity. A high scoring project may not be able to start immediately if resources and/or funding are not available; in turn, lower scoring projects with available resources may start ahead of a higher scoring project. Projects with a future-start date can be scheduled based on the future availability of resources and funding.

As a general rule, projects in motion will not be stopped and re-started just because their relative priority has changed; however the Project Prioritization Steering Committee retains responsibility for overall project portfolio management. From time to time, this will require adjustment of project activities based on the best interests of the institution. Some examples of reasons to halt a project include:

1. Organizational hardship (no money)
2. Project is destined to fail
3. Business case no longer applies
4. Overruns are extreme (budget and time)

Key Terms

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<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>A person, group, or organization that has direct or indirect stake in an information technology solution - it can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives, and policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Prioritization Steering Committee</td>
<td>The purpose of the Project Prioritization Steering Committee is to: 1. Provide a structured, transparent and objective process to recommend the best allocation of IT resources to effectively meet the needs of the institution.</td>
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### Project Prioritization Process

#### Prerequisites

The project prioritization process occurs in the Project Prioritization Steering Committee meeting. Prerequisites for the project prioritization process are:

1. Completed project request (by requester or Project Coordinator, i.e. whoever is leading the project – may or may not be the ITS Project Office)
2. Written indication of support for the project from the Project Sponsor
3. Proposals list – Project Server & Pending Prioritization status projects in Proposals > Project Portfolio (ITS Project Director)
4. ITS resource capacity by individual (by ITS managers)
5. Prioritized project portfolio (by Project Prioritization Steering Committee)

#### Primary Workflow

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| campus | 2. Serve as a review committee for cross-organizational IT projects that utilize the resources of ITS. 
Committee membership will need to be broadly representative to assure both the perception and reality of objective scoring. |
| ITS Project | Projects involving ITS systems or services and that require use of ITS resources to accomplish; commonly sponsored by the CIO or an ITS director, but may be sponsored by another campus manager. |
| HSU Strategic Objectives for IT Project Prioritization | President’s stated annual strategic objectives and other objectives designated by the Vice Presidents. |
| Project | An HSU ITS project has a temporary/defined life and is a unique effort involving two or more people and more than 20 hours of work (not duration). Projects are the result of a multi-task job performing something specific (i.e. a goal) with clear and agreed-upon objectives. |
The primary workflow describes how the project prioritization process works when everything goes as expected.

1. **Vice-President Screening** – Requests are screened by the appropriate Vice President prior to being scored.
2. **Score the project** – The Project Prioritization Steering Committee uses the completed project request to complete the HSU project scoring rubric. Repeat for all submitted completed project requests.
3. **Integrate scored project into the project portfolio** - The Project Director adds the score, funding availability, general comments, and review date to the proposal in the proposals list.
4. **Evaluate and assign resources to the project** -
   a. Project Prioritization Steering Committee looks at the five highest scored proposals, funding availability, and overall staff resource capacity, and then assigns the ITS resources.
   b. Project Director adds the ITS resources to the proposal.
   c. Project Prioritization Steering Committee continues portfolio review to identify projects where resources are available. This may not necessarily be in sequential order of the score, but where there is capacity to bring more projects active.
5. **Vice-President Review** – The draft prioritized schedule is submitted to the Vice Presidents for their review and final approval.
6. **Schedule the project** - Project Director promotes the resourced proposal to a project and changes its state to ‘approved’ and its status to ‘approved and scheduled.’ Scheduling includes applying the Microsoft Project template to the project workspace, and adding a “Resource Placeholder” task with the assigned resources attached for use in resource reporting purposes.
7. **Communicate the results of the project prioritization process** – The Project Director communicates the results of the process to the project requestors, typically within one week. The results are also communicated to the campus community.
8. **Post the project prioritization results and updated prioritized project portfolio** – The Project Director posts the prioritization and scheduling results, along with the updated prioritized portfolio on the ITS Project Office website.

**Alternate Workflow**

An alternate workflow occurs when something within a primary workflow step does not go as expected.

   Step 2 – Need additional information. The Project Prioritization Steering Committee calls the project requester and notes the additional information in the general comments section of the HSU project scoring rubric. Step 3 to schedule the top 5 will be deferred until all information can be gathered to complete the scoring process.
   Step 2 - Emergency project bypasses all processes and is immediately scheduled and resourced.
   Step 4 - Resources or funding are not available. Make a note in the HSU project scoring rubric and scored proposal. Item remains in a proposed status with a score.
   Step 4 – Internal resources are not available. Contract for external resources if funding is available to do so.
   Step 4 – If there is a tie (same score, schedule, and resources), the Project Prioritization Steering Committee, at their discretion, will re-evaluate the scores to break the tie.