# Georgia Highlands College

# Information Technology Strategic Plan

# 2024 – 2027

This plan provides a technology roadmap for Georgia Highlands College (GHC) and aids the Information Technology Division in focusing its resources to deliver the optimum level of technology to meet the future needs of all faculty, staff, and students.

## Executive Summary

**Vision and Mission**: The vision is to empower the college through innovative technology solutions, enhancing the learning experience for students, faculty, and staff. The mission is to deliver reliable, secure, and efficient IT services that support the college's strategic goals.

**Guiding Principles**: The principles include fostering collaboration, adapting swiftly to technological advancements, prioritizing data protection and cybersecurity, and optimizing resource utilization.

**Strategic Goals**:

1. **Diversify Technology Platforms**: The goal is to reduce GHC's reliance on a single platform by evaluating existing vendor relationships, investing in multi-platform solutions, and monitoring market trends.
2. **Software License Optimization**: The objective is to reduce software spend by eliminating redundancies. Actions include conducting a comprehensive software inventory and identifying unused or underutilized licenses.
3. **Cloud Migration**: The plan is to move on-premises services to multiple cloud vendors. Actions include assessing workloads for cloud suitability and developing a phased migration plan.

The plan aligns with Georgia Highlands College's mission and aims to drive technological excellence by embracing innovation, collaboration, and efficiency. It will enhance the college experience for all stakeholders.

# Vision and Mission

Our vision is to empower Georgia Highlands College through innovative technology solutions, enhancing the learning experience for students, faculty, and staff. Our mission is to deliver reliable, secure, and efficient IT services that support the college's strategic goals.

# Guiding Principles

1. **Collaboration**: Foster partnerships across departments to align technology initiatives with institutional objectives.
2. **Agility**: Adapt swiftly to technological advancements and changing needs.
3. **Security**: Prioritize data protection and cybersecurity.
4. **Cost-effectiveness**: Optimize resource utilization while maintaining service quality and availability.

# Strategic Goals

### 1. Diversify Technology Platforms

- Objective: Reduce reliance on a single platform.
- Actions:
    - Evaluate existing vendor relationships and explore alternatives.
    - Invest in multi-platform solutions to mitigate vendor lock-in.
    - Monitor market trends to identify emerging platforms.

Relying solely on a single software platform can have both advantages and disadvantages. One significant risk is the dependency it creates. If you rely exclusively on one platform, any issues or outages with that platform can significantly disrupt your operations. Downtime, security breaches, or technical glitches could leave you stranded. Additionally, being tied to a single platform can limit your flexibility, making it challenging to switch to an alternative due to data migration, retraining, and other costs.

On the other hand, diversifying your reliance has several benefits. First, it encourages innovation and adaptability. A single platform might not keep up with evolving technology trends or user needs. By diversifying, GHC can explore new

tools and stay current. Second, it enhances security and privacy. If a vulnerability is discovered in your sole platform, your entire system is at risk. Diversification can mitigate this risk. Moreover, some platforms may collect more data than you're comfortable with, so using alternatives allows you to choose platforms with better privacy practices.

Cost efficiency is another consideration. Different platforms have varying pricing models, and by diversifying, you can optimize costs based on your needs. Avoiding monopoly pricing is also possible when you're not locked into a single vendor. Furthermore, diversification enables customization and integration. Different platforms offer unique features, and combining them allows you to create customized solutions. Seamless integration between tools improves overall efficiency.

Lastly, there are platform-specific risks to consider. Regulatory changes or shifts in a platform's policies can impact your operations. Relying on multiple platforms ensures continuity even if one shuts down unexpectedly. Evaluating these trade-offs and strategically diversifying can lead to a more robust and adaptable technology ecosystem.

## 2. Software License Optimization

- Objective: Reduce software spend by eliminating redundancies.
- Actions:
    - Conduct a comprehensive software inventory.
    - Identify unused or underutilized licenses.
    - Utilized USG system contracts and volume discounts with vendors where practical.

Optimizing software license use across an institution is crucial for several reasons.

It ensures cost efficiency by managing licenses effectively. GHC can better allocate our budgets and avoid overspending on unnecessary licenses. This cost-saving approach ensures that financial resources are utilized efficiently.

Having proper license management helps organizations adhere to license agreements and legal requirements. Avoiding non-compliance penalties is essential for maintaining a positive reputation and financial stability.

Optimizing licenses allows institutions to allocate resources effectively. By identifying unused or rarely used licenses, they can reallocate budget and personnel to other critical areas or implement new technologies.

License optimization contributes to better security practices. It ensures that software is up-to-date, patched, and secure. Additionally, having a governance framework in place helps prevent unauthorized downloads and ensures proper usage of enterprise agreements .

In summary, optimizing software licenses benefits institutions by reducing costs, ensuring compliance, and enhancing overall operational efficiency.

## 3. Cloud Migration

- Objective: Move on-premises services to multiple cloud vendors.
- Actions:
  - Assess workloads for cloud suitability.
  - Develop a phased migration plan.
  - Monitor costs and performance post-migration.

There are several reasons to migrate services from on-premises data centers to cloud providers.

Cloud services often offer a pay-as-you-go model, allowing GHC to scale resources up or down based on demand, leading to cost savings compared to maintaining and upgrading on-premises hardware.

The cloud provides scalability, allowing quick adjustments to accommodate increased student enrollment during registration periods or handle peak workloads during finals.

Moving to the cloud reduces the maintenance burden on IT staff, freeing them from routine tasks like hardware upgrades and system maintenance. Instead, they can focus on strategic initiatives and innovation.

Cloud platforms offer enhanced security features, including encryption, firewalls, and intrusion detection systems. Additionally, data centers are geographically dispersed, reducing the risk of localized disasters.

Cloud services provide robust disaster recovery options, ensuring continuity of critical services in emergencies.

Cloud-based tools facilitate collaboration and accessibility, allowing documents and resources to be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection.

Cloud adoption encourages innovation and agility, enabling faster deployment of applications and supporting innovative teaching methods.

Cloud services support online learning, providing infrastructure for virtual classrooms, video conferencing, and content delivery.

Finally, leveraging vendor expertise allows GHC to benefit from best practices and stay up-to-date with the latest technologies.

## Conclusion

Our IT Strategic Plan aligns with Georgia Highlands College's mission and will drive technological excellence. By embracing innovation, collaboration, and efficiency, we will enhance the college experience for all stakeholders.