

# **IT Centralization at CWRU: The Path from IT to [U]Tech**

## **EARLY ADOPTERS**

The university's Student Affairs office was the first to agree to transition their internal IT organization including expanding its role to support the president and the University General unit (the core administrative management center of the university) under the new unified structure. This new team, known as the Executive IT Services Group, was created and the process had its first win. Prior to that time, the university executives had no expedited tech service or special treatment to keep them productive. Also, the president insisted that her cabinet and University central administration should go first with the transition, to blaze the trail and pilot the experience in service of units yet to come.

The CWRU School of Law then came forward next to join the new structure. It piloted new methods and procedures related to combining efforts and resources that would work for subsequent schools and areas. The early adopters provided illustrations of successful and relatively painless transformations, giving leadership confidence that it would deliver the university to the right technology destination. Subsequently, staff from all over the university were thoughtfully transitioned into the new organization over the period of one year with consideration given to each school's specific needs.

A significant step occurred when the Dean of the School of Medicine became supportive after posing questions about the return on her investment in IT. Medical, Nursing and Dental units had been preliminarily brought together when planning for the new health education building, so these schools were prime candidates for the concept of centralization. The med school dean joined IT leaders and CWRU innovators in a visit to Microsoft that illuminated the value the med school receives for its financial investment in IT. A number of other deans soon recognized the value of eliminating separate IT shops in favor of one centralized, effective unit.