



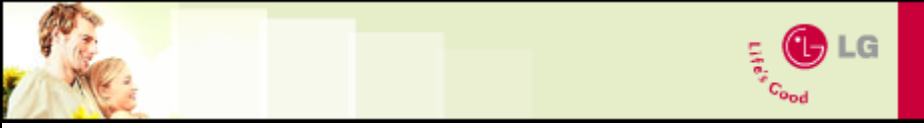
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Other schools take lead in IT outsourcing

Drexel finds success selling tech resources to smaller schools; Penn sits on the sidelines

By AUSTIN LAVIN
 April 11, 2005

Drexel University is leading the way for universities selling information technology services to other academic institutions, a path that Penn has chosen not to take.

The cost of providing IT services and other sophisticated technology is unbearable for many smaller colleges.

However, Drexel has the budget to procure technology services. By providing these services to schools that otherwise could not afford it, Drexel manages to keep its costs even lower.

"We're not established in the profit entity. Effectively, the resources we obtain through these services get filtered back into our system. We're not trying to create some profit type of situation. We're trying to leverage resources," said John Bielec, vice president for information resources and technology at Drexel.

Drexel provides different services to each of the approximately 40 schools it has relationships with. Some examples of services offered include the operation of e-mail and financial systems.

Bielec said that over the Internet, Drexel can allow other institutions access to its services.

"You don't have to own everything to have services as long as you're connected," Bielec said.

Like Drexel, Penn is large enough that it is able to afford its own IT services.

Robin Beck, vice president of information systems and computing at Penn, said that the University's main priority is providing the best possible service to its internal clients.

Beck added that Penn is able to leverage the size and IT needs of the 12

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schools at Penn and the central administrative offices to keep costs low.

For example, by combining the computing needs of the College and Wharton, the University is able to make the purchase cheaper than the College or Wharton could alone.

"At Penn, no one stands alone. What Drexel does with other small colleges is to help them not stand alone," Beck said.

Yet it seems to make very little difference to students and faculty whether it is Drexel, Penn or another institution making the purchase or providing the service.

Regarding Drexel's services, Bielec said, "The whole concept is that it's irrelevant for students and faculty where the services are being provided from -- conceptually, although people realize they have a relationship with us, there is no branding Drexel."

While Penn does not sell IT services, it is involved in the provision of technology services to other schools through MAGPI, a provider of Internet2.

"I2 is a critical enabler for research, and we want to provide that capability to researchers at Penn," Beck said. "By sharing the costs with others, Penn does not incur the expense of the entire I2 bandwidth that is in excess of our current needs."

Princeton University, Temple University and Johnson & Johnson are all current subscribers to MAGPI.

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