Information technology at universities is proudly assuming its principal collaborative position on the horizon of an ever-evolving higher education landscape. This year has been a dynamic and important one in the way its led UC to recognize how to transform Big Data, analytics and eLearning, and also in the way it’s prompted us to understand how to best maintain technological excellence for years to come, all to ultimately enhance the educational and research experience for the entire university community.

Role of Big Data in the Education Space
What we find is everyone—students, faculty, staff and community partners—sees the potential and importance of Big Data and analytics. The economic and workforce demand for qualified graduates who are ready to enter this sector of the workforce is high and will continue to grow.

Local data suggest that by the year 2020, total IT-related jobs will top 33,000—a 26.5 percent increase from 2010. In response to this need, a task force of about seventy UC faculty has guided the development of an institute dedicated to computing, data sciences and analytics.

Universities also generate and are responsible for curating massive amounts of data. At UC, we recently launched an e-Science and digital humanities initiative with university libraries. This collaboration is guiding the establishment of a digital repository that captures data; organizes it; makes it accessible; and enables its reuse and reformatting. A university is the perfect place to develop new models such as this to curate and make data transparently available.

Technology's Role in Keeping Pace with Change
Tools that make it possible to utilize data to impact student success are now becoming more widely available. These opportunities are transformative and can really change the direction and relevance of IT at a university.

The University of Cincinnati offers students a balance of educational excellence and real-world experience. UC ranks among the nation’s top twenty-five public
At UC, student enrollment this year exceeds 43,000, which means at any one point we have 40,000+ simultaneous wireless connections on our network. Innovative and efficient technology solutions that support the academic and research priorities of the university.

Workforce Development
As an IT operation in a higher education institution, our responsibility to attract, retain and incent IT talent is two-fold. We employ IT professionals, and we support the education of future IT professionals.

UC is a partner in the Cincinnati USA IT Higher Ed Collaborative, which is fully committed to helping the region’s students pursue successful careers in Information Technology and related fields. Other partners include the Partners for a Competitive Workforce, Cincinnati CIO Roundtable, Cincinnati USA Partnership for Economic Development, Miami University, Northern Kentucky University College of Informatics, Xavier University, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Gateway Community and Technical College and the INTERAlliance of Greater Cincinnati.

Technology and Students
Technological trends like BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) have a great impact on education. Industry estimates predicted undergraduate students would bring at least three to five distinct wireless devices to campuses with them this fall. At UC, student enrollment this year exceeds 43,000, which means at any one point we have 40,000+ simultaneous wireless connections on our network.

Students are a force for technology adoption. By building a strong relationship with Student Government, and with students at-large, they become true partners in Information Technology and data services. At UC, students are very well informed, and they are pushing the envelope. That is a good thing.

Building Partnerships
IT has a commitment to serve, to lead and to partner with students, faculty and staff to enable student and faculty success and drive innovation. In higher education, IT often grew from a need to serve the academic and research needs of individual departments. As technology became more ubiquitous, continuing to operate in “silos” to meet the needs of individual academic and research departments makes meeting the collective needs of the enterprise more difficult. Becoming an interdependent IT community—sharing individual expertise to collectively solve problems—adds IT-enabled value to the institutional mission.

IT isn’t just about technology. It’s also about people listening and communicating. It’s about supporting the 21st century needs and innovations of students and faculty together.