

“Blue” turf thinking?

course evaluations at Boise State

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“We were going to spend \$750,000 to pull up an old green carpet and put down a new green carpet, and nobody was going to notice or care. Everybody knows it’s artificial turf. Why not do it in our school colors?”

-Gene Bleymaier

Boise State Athletic Director in 1986





STRATEGIC PLAN: BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS 2021-2026

University Strategic Planning Council

Process

Improve Educational Access and Student Success

Innovation for Institutional Impact

Advance Research and Creative Activity

Overview

We assessed our priorities and gave deep thought to what makes us who we are as we built our Blueprint for Success. The strategic plan reflects the ways in which we intend to positively impact our students, our larger community, business and industry, government and non-profit organizations, our state's economy, the arts, and so much more.

Our unique Boise State mindset – **Blue Turf Thinking** – is not about doing more with less, but doing our work in ways that envision a better future, that see our students and their needs more clearly, that take new approaches to research and to service. Our strategic plan, then, isn't about adding another layer of work. Rather, as a community, we have developed clear guidelines about where we should direct our efforts going forward, allowing us to release labor that no longer serves our community.

I truly believe we will build upon our university's strengths and the vital work that has already been done.

Dr. Marlene Tromp
President
Boise State University

Blue Turf Thinking is . . . doing our work in ways that envision a better future, that see our students and their needs more clearly, that take new approaches to research and to service.



Blue turf thinking means. . .

Question assumptions

Stick your neck out

Do something that will have a lasting impact



Wait, what do
course evaluations
have to do with
blue turf thinking?
(besides the obvious play on words)



Policy 4300: Student evaluation of faculty

January, 2008 revision. 3.1.1.a . . .

*Students will be able to participate confidentially through an **on-line** system.*

Moving from working prototype to enterprise system



Timeline

2010: Legacy system rolled out

2015: Learning Technology Solutions (LTS) offers to assist with support and management

2016: Project Management Office (PMO) analysis of “backend” processes

2019: RFI

2020 - present: Implementation project



2010: Legacy system is rolled out

Architecture

- Data warehouse exports
- Access database
- Boutique frontend

Support

- Part-time (eventually retired) faculty member
- Part-time admin support in Institutional Effectiveness

Double edged sword

- Lots of custom questions and reports



2015: LTS offers to assist with support and management

Model

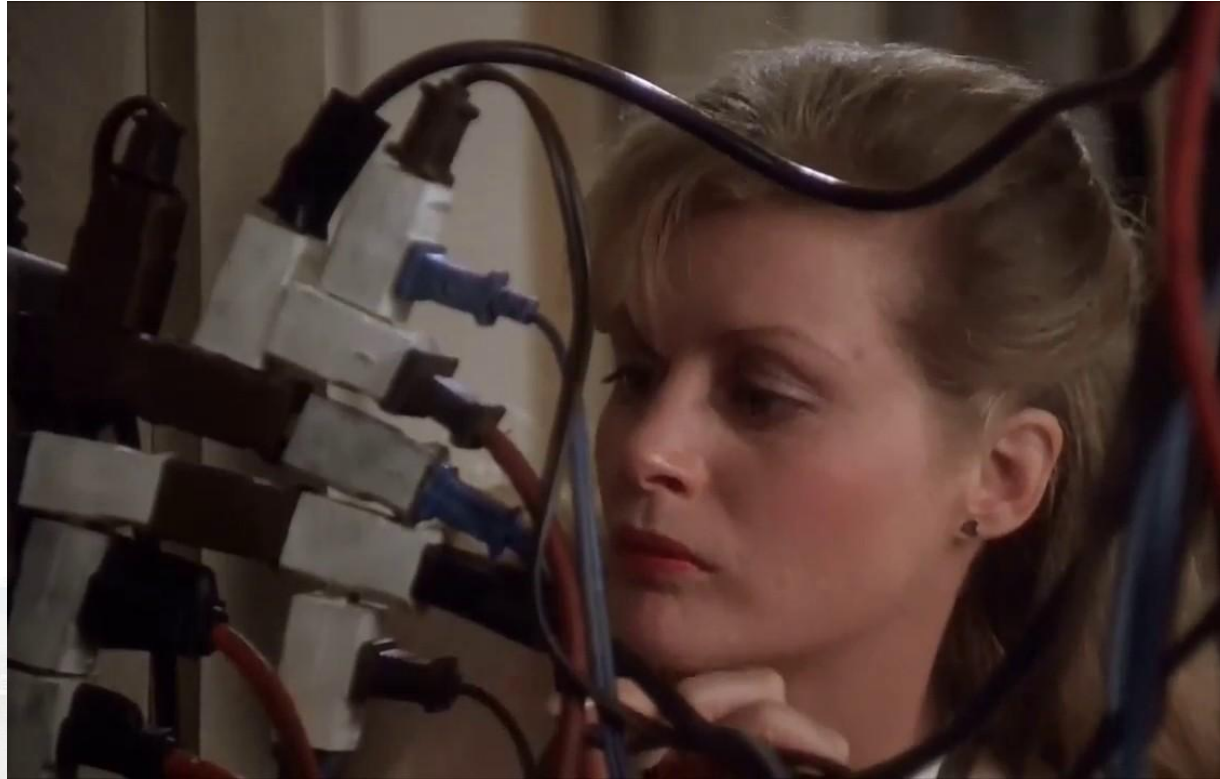
- Dedicated FTE
- Documentation and training with Tier 1 Help Desk (as point of contact)

Goals

- Build trust
- Understand current system
- Scalable service

Challenges

- Custom complexity meant incremental improvements were impossible
- Making the case for need to change/improve



2016: PMO analysis of “backend” processes

Outputs

- Mapped processes
- Understood gaps/pain points

Conclusions

- Would benefit from new frontend with modern integration options



2019: RFI

Structure

- Committee with strong representation from faculty and academic leadership

Criteria

- Emphasized student experience, faculty preferences, and administrative requirements

Results

- Blue was unanimous favorite by wide margin
- Best features and room to grow



2020 - present: Implementation project

- Review, revisit, and reverse engineer hundreds of unique question sets and reports
- Developed boomi integrations to load course and user data
- Fortify roles/relationship with Provost Office
- Migrate Historical Data into Blue from Legacy system
- Integration between Canvas-Blue
- University level questions: first time in the history of Boise State where all courses receive the same six questions



Key improvements

- Automated data uploads with nightly sync; no more manual data uploads!
- System-managed schedules for different sessions (short sessions vs Regular session)
- New aggregated reports for chairs, deans, etc
- New aggregated special topics reports, e.g., Online and Service Learning
- New option to evaluate TAs
- LMS integration
- University questions!

Lessons Learned

- Pandemics are tough!
- No BA initially
 - Need appropriate internal resources
 - 7 project team members gone (retire, changed positions within University, left University, competing priorities)
- Great time to review University policies
- Learning to go at it without Legacy SME
- Change is an opportunity to re-evaluate and improve process
- Kudos to the following
 - Tina Gonzales, Business Analyst
 - Jay VanPut, Explorance's Deployment & Integration Engineer
 - Shari Ellertson, Institutional Effectiveness
 - Juliet Wilhelm and Adonis Hamad, Technologists (SMEs)
 - Zeynep Hansen, Michelle Payne, & Leif Nelson, Project Sponsorship



The IT way

Stability

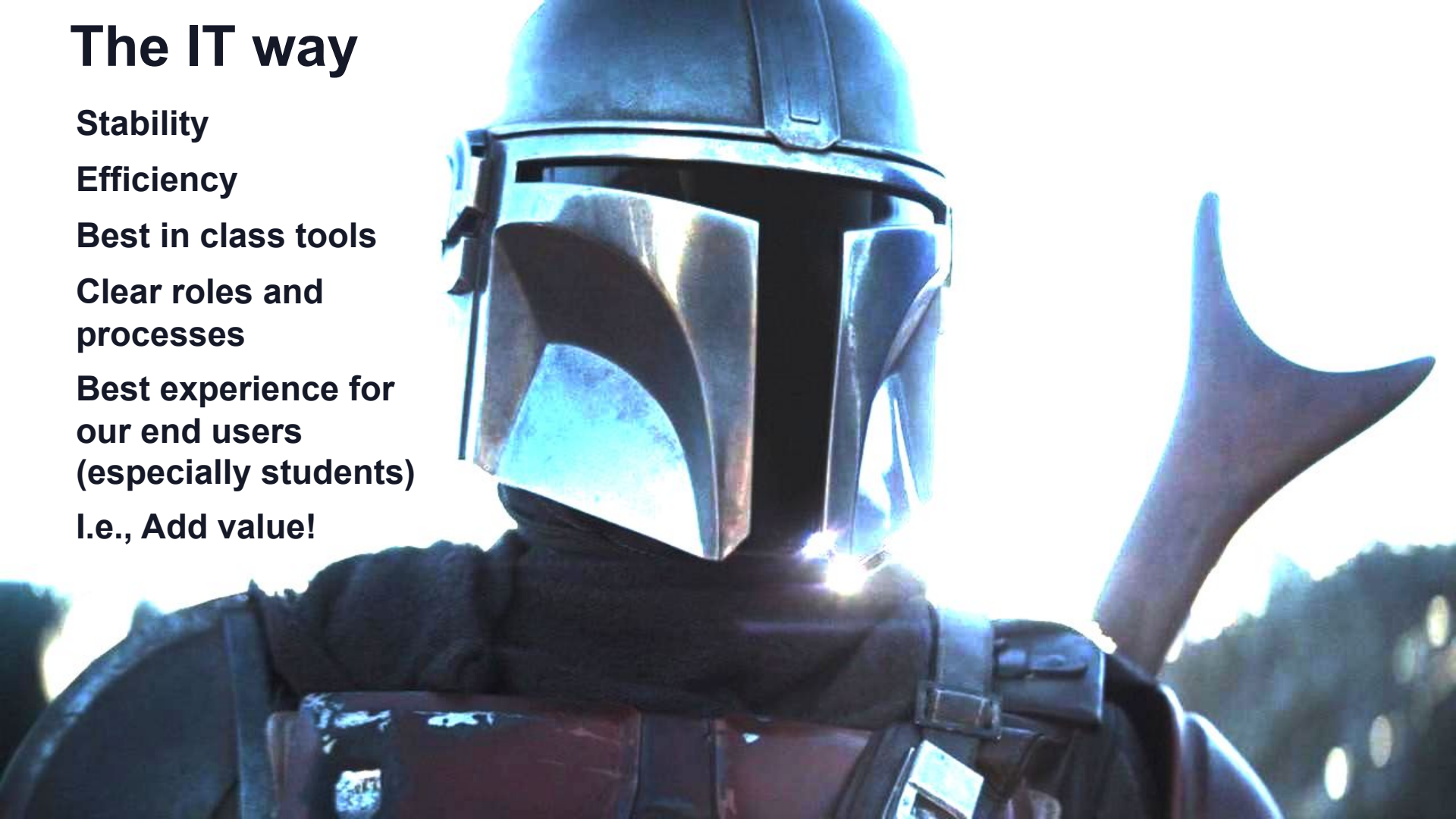
Efficiency

Best in class tools

**Clear roles and
processes**

**Best experience for
our end users
(especially students)**

I.e., Add value!



Future....

**Midterm Evaluations
Simplifying Reports
Auto-Sync Course Evaluation
results with Tenure & Promotion
system**



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Questions

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