Vision:

UAB desires to enhance its educational mission by incorporating state-of-the-art technology that will expand the borders of the campus. The infrastructure of the technology systems should be flexible to allow expansion and change as developments unfold.

Definition:

The instructional technology infrastructure includes physically equipped and networked classrooms that allow integration of video and computerized resources into the curriculum and promote distance learning, on and off-campus student access to campus technology resources, a support staff to enable faculty and students to develop capabilities and expertise, and leadership and incentives to promote faculty involvement.

Opportunities:

The campus-wide information committee believes the incorporation of video and other information technologies into instruction can take advantage of equipment, technologies and strategies that are in place today.

The fiber optic plant is sufficient to handle short term video and networked classroom needs. Classrooms can be networked for approximately $500 each. However, other costs such as support personnel and security will require further investigation. The connection of major conference rooms to the fiber is encouraged for video use. The costs include fiber at $6,000 per floor (depending on location) plus $5,000 per room for transmission equipment. Video and data projection equipment can be provided for $5,000 to $25,000 per classroom. In the future, video data will not be differentiated from other data traversing the network and the cost of video utilization will drop. The inherent flexibility of UAB's network design allows incremental expansion as network and video usage grows. Central support for growth and connectivity should continue to be fiscally provided through the network charging mechanism.

There are over 20 network-connected student computing labs and learning resource centers in the libraries and schools. Several labs could be made generally available to students and faculty nights and weekends when not in use for instruction. The labs can be staffed by student assistants for support and security for an additional 40 hours per week for $12,000 per lab per year. This does
not include extra security provisions for remote buildings. Central funding of these student support services should be provided to the libraries and affected schools.

There are a number of individuals in various departments across campus (the libraries, the computer centers, Communication Services, Educational Services, Department of Communication Studies, Medical Television, UAB Special Studies) providing video and instructional computing consulting. Their expertise is derived in part from their departmental associations. The university should establish a formal Instructional Technologies Support Group using these departmental resources within an informal structure to support the growth of instructional technologies. It should be charged with increasing awareness of what is available and compatible with existing initiatives and helping faculty develop capabilities and expertise. Support must be an ongoing, not an ad-hoc, process. The Support Group must have a budget and a charge back mechanism to reimburse departments for their time and allow for growth.

The provost, department chairs and faculty senate must provide leadership to promote and support the use of technology by the faculty. The faculty reward system should reflect the importance of implementing innovative approaches to teaching and learning.