

Hector Villicana

Research Technology, Federated IT & AI Strategy

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25+

years of technology leadership at the University of California

50+

technology professionals led through five directors

\$5M

approximate annual technology portfolio

30,000+

users across 55+ departments and units in 34 buildings

SUMMARY

Research-university technology executive with more than 25 years of technology leadership across the University of California, including seven years as Associate CIO and Executive Director at UC Santa Barbara.

Brings an unusual combination of faculty-facing research technology and enterprise operating leadership, spanning cloud, GPU-enabled computing, and LLM services. Trusted by deans, vice chancellors, CIOs, faculty, and researchers to turn complex academic and research needs into technology strategy, secure services, and sustainable operating models.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Research Computing, Cloud & GPU Infrastructure
- Federated IT, Shared Services & Operating Models
- Cybersecurity, Research Data Protection & Resilience
- Organizational Leadership, Talent & Change Management
- Technology Strategy, Governance & Faculty Partnership
- AI Strategy, Emerging Technology & Responsible Adoption
- Portfolio, Budget, Procurement & Vendor Strategy
- Enterprise Platforms, Data Governance & Integration

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of California, Santa Barbara • 2018–2025

Associate CIO for Instruction

CONCURRENT APPOINTMENT

2021–2025 • Student Digital Experience, Enterprise Strategy & Cybersecurity

Executive Director, Letters and Science IT

2018–2025 • Enterprise, Research and Instructional IT Services & Operations

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP, FACULTY PARTNERSHIP & STRATEGY

- Led more than 50 technology professionals through five directors responsible for Client Success, Instructional Services, Infrastructure, Process Improvement, and Finance and Human Resources.
- Served in a divisional CIO operating model, partnering with the campus CIO, deans, vice chancellors, faculty, and researchers; participated in the Council of Deans and advised executive bodies on technology strategy, risk, and investment priorities.
- Provided strategic and cybersecurity oversight for five additional academic IT organizations supporting 93 percent of UCSB faculty.

RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY, CLOUD & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- Directed research technology and cloud services (AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, Kubernetes, GPU-enabled computing) in partnership with the Office of Research, a researcher-organized Research IT working group, and computer science faculty.
- Led a pilot large language model service for university researchers, translating faculty requirements into infrastructure, access models, responsible-use guidance, and evaluation measures.
- Served on the UCSB AI Advisory Committee and developed responsible and ethical AI use guidelines, helping move promising experimentation toward governed institutional use.

FEDERATED IT, GOVERNANCE & SERVICE STRATEGY

- Transformed technology services that had developed independently across more than 55 departments into a coordinated ITIL-based operating model with clearer ownership and accountability, preserving specialized capabilities where local expertise added value.
- Led one of UCSB's largest distributed technology organizations, partnering closely with central IT on architecture, cybersecurity, identity, procurement, and shared services.
- Established portfolio and governance practices that made priorities, costs, risks, and capacity visible to executive leaders.
- Chaired the Letters and Science student technology fee committee, governing a substantial technology investment portfolio.
- Transformed curriculum planning and budgeting for the College of Letters and Science.

University of California, Santa Barbara (continued) • 2018–2025

ENTERPRISE TRANSFORMATION, DATA & DIGITAL SERVICES

- Directed implementation of Salesforce Student Success Hub across more than 50 departments, consolidating fragmented advising and student-service processes into a shared environment with common governance for ownership, access, data quality, and privacy.
- Provided executive leadership for UCSB's LMS migration of 8,500 course sites from Moodle to Canvas for nearly 30,000 users: a phased two-year rollout (committee, pilot, summer, fall launch) that reached 100% transition with no stragglers and no instructional disruption.
- Championed UCSB's enterprise student mobile application, modernized academic advising, and directed the student IT help desk.
- Held institution-wide responsibility for instructional technology and student digital experience, including 140+ classrooms and labs.
- Created a process improvement team and led a director-level Project Management Office and Process Improvement function, driving university-wide digital transformation with business and academic offices through DocuSign.

CYBERSECURITY, RISK & OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

- Served as cybersecurity and risk leader for the academic division, directing implementation of University of California security requirements grounded in ISO 27001 and NIST-based practices.
- Led risk assessment, endpoint detection and response, vulnerability remediation, audit response, business continuity, and disaster recovery, with escalation through the institutional CISO.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP, VENDORS & PEOPLE LEADERSHIP

- Managed an approximately \$5 million annual technology portfolio and led seven-figure RFPs, vendor evaluations, and contract negotiations across cloud, infrastructure, enterprise applications, and SaaS.
- Managed the Campus Office of Software Licensing, a recharge-supported operation exceeding \$1 million annually.
- Developed leaders through coaching and succession planning; managed represented employees in a unionized public university.

University of California, Davis • 1996–2018

Director, Help Desk and Infrastructure Lead

2010–2018 · 10 direct reports · approximately \$2M operating budget · 35,000+ users

- Led service desk, infrastructure, end-user computing, virtualization, and library and VPN access services for 35,000+ users and patrons.
- Directed VMware virtual computing environments and developed business continuity and disaster recovery plans for critical systems.
- Partnered with the UC Davis Data Sciences Lab on research and instructional environments; led implementation of Alma and Primo.

Help Desk Manager, Library

2004–2010 · 5 direct reports · help desk, desktop support, systems administration, infrastructure, and public computing services

Earlier Technology and Administrative Roles

1996–2004 · IT Student Worker · IT Support Technician · Human Resources Web Developer · Lecturer · Assistant Editor, Journal of the American Statistical Association

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, English Literature, University of California, Davis · **2001** · Instructor of Record for ENL5P writing courses

Bachelor of Arts, English Literature & Political Science, University of California, Davis · **1999**

TECHNOLOGY EXPERTISE

AI & Emerging Tech: AWS Bedrock, Hugging Face, Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT/Codex, Claude, Gemini, agentic AI, Model Context Protocol

Cloud & Infrastructure: AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, Kubernetes, SUSE Rancher/Harvester, Ceph, VMware, GPU-enabled computing

Enterprise Platforms: Salesforce, Canvas, Moodle, DocuSign, ServiceNow, Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, Box, Smartsheet, Drupal

Data & Integration: Enterprise data governance, MuleSoft, Informatica, identity integrations, reporting, analytics, data warehousing

Security & Risk: ISO 27001-aligned and NIST-based practices, FERPA, HECVAT, EDR/XDR, vulnerability management, IAM

Methods: Lean Six Sigma, ITIL, IT Service Management, Agile, project and change management, DevOps, CI/CD

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Chair: Letters and Science student technology fee committee

Member: UCSB AI Advisory Committee · UCSB CIO Council · UCSB IT Council · EDUCAUSE · NACUBO ·

Salesforce Higher Education Advisory Group · UC Davis Assistive Technology Committee · UC Admin Management Professionals

Ex-Officio: UCSB Research IT Governance · UC Educational Teaching & Learning Committee · UC Tech Planning Committee

Contributor: UC Office of the President systemwide technology strategy and procurement · UC Digital Library working groups

Co-founder: UCSB Makerspace · **Mentor:** UCSB Internship & Staff Engagement Programs