Technology Needs For Blended/Online/Remote Courses
Last Updated June 8, 2020 at 18:27

Proposal:

To secure access to and support for the use of digital devices and internet needed for participation in online and distance education by SE students and faculty, we propose that that the university develop policies to support this process and to publicize the steps toward the procurement of resources.

Recommended Options for Student Support:

- SE purchase and retain ownership of wifi enabled digital devices and/or mobile hotspots to be checked out by students for use during the semester of enrollment. Insurance should be provided through the university for a small premium paid by the student.
- SE facilitate adjustment to the cost of attendance totals to provide for the purchase of wifi enabled digital devices and/or mobile hotspots for all qualifying students. A process by which students can request an increase in their financial aid eligibility to include technology costs should be transparent and proactively communicated.
- SE develop a needs-based fund for students to acquire wi-fi enabled digital devices and/or mobile hotspots during their attendance at the university, with the student retaining ownership of the device.
- SE equip technology hubs/labs with mobile digital devices to be checked out and returned for short-term campus/local use.

For Faculty Support:

- We recommend the university confer with faculty members who will teach all or part of their courses either online, blended, or remote in Fall 2020 to determine any technological needs for those courses and accommodate these needs by providing the needed equipment for both office and remote use cases.
  - All faculty will be teaching online following Thanksgiving Break (President Newsom's announcement 6/5/2020)

Considerations for Implementation:

- Students may begin a semester with working technologies, and in some cases these technologies may cease to function during the course of the term or semester. In order for students to be successful in blended, remote, and online courses, they are asked to check course content frequently or daily. Policies developed to support student access to appropriate technologies should provide potential solutions for these circumstances.
- A number of models for provisioning students and faculties with wifi-enabled technologies and hot spots can be explored to meet the needs of Southeastern. K12 implementation models may provide useful insights.
- As a rural university, faculty and students often struggle to find reliable internet access. Innovative partnerships with K12 systems and local businesses may prove fruitful.

- We recommend that the Division of Information Technology (IT) be proactively engaged in the management of technology needs, distribution of resources, and continuing support of technologies required to maintain a robust technological infrastructure for faculty, staff, and students, both on and off campus. Ongoing and timely communication with the IT will be essential to supporting student and faculty access to needed technologies, and this may require additional resources being devoted to IT.

AAUP Rationale:

This proposal is aligned with the AAUP's Statement on Online & Distance Education, as it enables faculty "to carry out their instructional responsibilities" by providing "support in the form of academic, clerical, and technical assistance, as well as means of communicating and conferring with students." The document also states: "The institution is responsible for the technological delivery of the course."