New Student Technology Initiatives: FLC "TechPack", Digital Literacy Partnership, Student Survey

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To: FLC-OFFICIAL-L <flc-official-l@listserv.fortlewis.edu>

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Student Tech Report_final.pdf;

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As has become all too clear over the past week, we have not yet escaped our COVID-defined world. Please know that we are working on campus protocols given trends in COVID's Delta variants, and we will issue clear information shortly. In the meantime, allow me to offer additional campus planning updates for fall--and use this email to **emphasize our exciting new "TechPack" program and new state leadership role in digital literacy and inclusion.**

One of the insights gained over our past three COVID-interrupted semesters is the importance of technological resources to student success. When we needed to shift online in spring 2020, we quickly realized that many of our students had insufficient hardware and software and insufficient internet access and training. Overnight, IT responded with an innovative laptop and hotspot rental program. Building on what we learned from this tech response, we have been strategizing, developing, and now implementing a comprehensive technology program that will provide all FLC students with high-quality tech access and support.

First, please see our innovative new [TechPack Program](#), which features:
- **[TechPack Hardware](#):** students can rent a laptop for $50 a semester, with financial assistance available
- **[TechPack Software](#):** students can download software, such as the Office Suite, via Skysoft
- **[TechPack Training](#):** students can get trained on tech basic skills, using a set of tutorial links for:
    - The Fort
    - Email
    - Office 365
    - Canvas
    - WebOpus
    - Zoom
- **[TechPack Support](#):** students can get the support they need from a specially trained [Tech Team of peer tutors](#), housed in the Peer Education Center, and the IT Help Desk
- Obviously, Marketing and Communications designed a great new website and publicity campaign to launch this fantastic program!

Second, we are designing new digital literacy modules/mini-courses as part of a great "Digital Literacy and Inclusion" partnership with the Colorado Office of the Future Work--FLC is featured on their [Digital Inclusion webpage](#) (scroll down). We wanted to take the idea of digital access one step further, creating new ways to emphasize equity and inclusion as we shape our future digital world. Through a grant-funded partnership with the Office of the Future of Work, FLC is helping to define the state's higher education approach to digital inclusion. Teaching and Learning Services Director Jen Rider is leading a new project to design digital literacy modules that can be imported into your courses or that students can take together as a one-credit course; this work will be supported by the peer Tech Team. This digital literacy instruction will be offered as part of our new Academic Hub, which is developing a series of similar modules/mini-courses on skills essential to both academic and career success--financial literacy is also now underway!

Third, note that all of this work truly has our students at the center. At the end of last semester, Teaching and Learning Services surveyed students on their tech needs and preferences. See Jen's explanation of the survey in her email below. **The attached report provides the results of that TLS student tech survey.** The survey finds, "*students have found online learning does work with increased flexibility, accessibility and persistence to graduation, even in difficult circumstances... Students also acknowledged the empathy, flexibility, and connection from faculty during COVID*" (11). We used this report to help shape the initiatives above. Thank you, Jen and Ayla for this insightful report.

With this new TechPack programming, we are providing students with the cutting-edge technology they need. We are also creating a cutting-edge campus: when all students own a laptop, any classroom can become a computer classroom and any space can become a tech-enabled study space. And, with our Digital Literacy and Inclusion project, I don't think it is too bold to say that we are also working to imagine a better technological world. Many colleges offer an element of tech support—but we could find no other campus that offered this type of multi-faceted, forward-looking program. Obviously, this is a truly innovative project, delivered in record speed through a cross-campus collaborative, integrated effort. A huge thank you to IT, Teaching and Learning Services, Peer Education, Career Services, and Marketing and Communications!

Best,
Cheryl

Dear Faculty and Staff,

This past spring, Teaching and Learning Services conducted an FLC student survey on students and technology. More than 250 students responded, providing important data around student experiences and preferences in 3 areas:
1. Course enrollment preferences
2. Student support services and student engagement
3. Device ownership

We also drilled in to see how these impact or are impacted by other factors such as work, living off-campus, or having dependents.

We hope that you might be able to use anything from this report that is relevant to your work. The attached report includes a summary of the data in each of these 3 areas, as well as recommendations for campus.

Please reach out with any questions or for any support that we may be able to offer.
Warmly,
Jen

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