2018-2019
Technology Policy Committee
Members: Catherine Sausville (COS, Co-Chair), Debra Sprague (CEHD, Co-Chair), Chris Barthold (CEHD), Xiaomei Cai (CHSS), Gerald Hanweck (School of Business), Lance Liotta (COS), Bob Osgood (VSE).

The Faculty Senate Technology Policy Committee would like to thank the University’s CIO, Marilyn T Smith, and her senior staff. Without their willingness to participate in open and frank discussions, the work of this committee would not have been possible.

Major Committee topics: Issue with Mac Computers being Inaccessible, Development of a Student Laptop Policy, Student access to high performance computing, VCL Policies, Address issues arising from having different student email and faculty email, Blackboard Announcements, Password Requirements, ITS Policy Changes, Blackboard, Classroom Courseleaf Workflow, Robinson Technology Classrooms, Access to SPSS, ITS Annual Update

Summary of briefings for the above topics:

- Mac Computers – the problem was due to a software bug within Microsoft. A file was created that was storing data repeatedly. This caused too much data to be stored and caused the computers to crash. Microsoft was made aware of the issue and an update was issued.
- Student Laptop Policy – It was proposed that Mason develop a student laptop policy. There was concern expressed about the cost of laptops being prohibitive for some students. Also, it was not clear if all colleges can justify requiring students purchasing laptops given the number of computer labs available on campus. The committee agreed to do some research on this and look at the laptop policies of other universities.
- Student access to high performance computing – There is an AWS cluster made as a research cluster. Currently not available for education but exceptions are being made. AWS can not do high performance computing. There are analytics being run to see who is using the cluster and what the needs are.
- VCL Policies – We will revisit the VCL policy later to see if time limit can be expanded for specific groups of people.
- Blackboard Announcements – If an announcement is scheduled to be sent to students at a later time, the ability to send the announcement via e-mail is not currently an available feature. This has been submitted to Blackboard as a feature request, and is noted as “under review.” Students can choose to receive notifications of new announcements, even if not emailed:
  - If a student has the mobile app installed and notifications turned on, they will receive a push notification when the announcement becomes available
  - Users can sign up for various email notifications, including new announcements (under their Name at top right, then Settings > Notification Settings
• Password Requirements – special characters are not a requirement for passwords.
• ITS Policy Changes - . In addition to passwords, 2-Factor Authentication is being piloted for Blackboard and e-mail. This will allow for stronger security and reduce outside access to these systems.
• Blackboard – there is no current plan to do away with Blackboard and replace it with another Learning Management System (LMS). Any new LMS would have to be compatible with Banner and other university systems.
• Classroom Courseleaf Workflow – concern was expressed about the amount of time needed to set up scheduling modifications for multiple sections of the same course. Request was made to change the settings in Workflow. This will be taken to the Registrar Office to see if such modifications can be made.
• Robinson Technology Classrooms – information was shared on the configuration of classrooms in the remodeled Robinson Hall. Each room will support web conferencing. All rooms will have wireless access and faculty will need to bring their own laptops or tablets. There will be large displays in each room and document cameras. There will be no computer labs in the building.
• Access to SPSS – SPSS is available on all university computer labs. If SPSS is not on a computer in one of the labs this should be brought to ITS attention. The Virtual Computer Lab (VCL) is an open source program and ITS is aware of limitations. They were unaware of issues with SPSS crashing on VCL. Anyone encountering such issues should bring it to the attention of ITS.
• The new model of classrooms will implement BYOD (Bring your own device) policies. There will not be front instructor computers and these will not be identified in a scheduling category. Faculty are able to check out devices to use.
• There are new classifications for classrooms and there is a document camera in 80% of classrooms on campus.
• There is training available to use the new Robinson classrooms and there is a “sandbox” in Buccanan D203. There will be a certificate required to teach in the new rooms.