Difference Makers
BECOME ONE AT VCSU

Information Technology

Rhoades Science Center 117

technologyservices.vcsu.edu/

Chief Information Officer

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Technology Service Desk

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Technology Service Desk—Technical Support

The VCSU Technology Service Desk, located in Rhoades Science Center 117, provides technical support for computers, computer networking, classroom presentation equipment, cameras, printers, telephones, online "enterprise" applications, and interactive video classroom services. The full-service VCSU Technology Service Desk is available for phone and walk-in support approximately 9 hours per day, Monday-Friday. A North Dakota University System Help Desk provides additional phone support 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Viking Card

The Viking Card is the official VCSU ID card. The card is not necessary for strictly off-campus and distance learners. The card is required on-campus to access events and selected doors; track meal plans and discretionary dining dollars; checkout library materials and technology items. It may be used to make purchases at the business office, bookstore and other locations. A Viking Card website allows students and parents to add value to the card and students can use the website to monitor card balances and to immediately disable a lost or stolen card. User identity must be verified in person by a VCSU employee when the Viking Card is issued.

Personal Web Portal

All registered students have access to a personalized web-based portal. The portal organizes web-based services and provides a single point of access to email, a personal calendar, VCSU news and information, personal website and file storage space, software downloads, and class information. Students have access to these services anytime, anywhere, on any computing device with a modern web browser and network connectivity.

Online Learning Management System

All VCSU classes use an LMS (Learning Management System) to enhance student learning. The LMS includes tools for course handouts, announcements, group and private discussions, test administration, internet links, and delivery of course content. The typical classroom course uses one or more of the tools, while totally online classes use all of the available tools.

An internet link to each online course a student is registered for automatically appears within the student's personal web portal.

Web Conferencing

Faculty and students use a web conferencing system to allow guest speakers and students located at distant locations to participate in a live session. The system is occasionally used for general student advising and communication purposes. Users can collaborate via chat, voice, video, information appearing on the computer screen, and an electronic whiteboard.

Class Recordings

Some classes use a recording system to capture voice, computer, and video information. The system serves several purposes, including the following: 1) students absent from a class session can get a portion of the class information missed, 2) students can review a class session to improve their understanding or to review for an exam, and 3) faculty can create reusable multimedia resources and store them in the online learning management system.

Software Licensing and Distribution

VCSU obtains institutional site licenses for a variety of professional software. Microsoft Office 365 is available to all employees and all registered students. Office 365 includes online file storage, email/calendar and free download of Microsoft software, including Word, PowerPoint, Excel and many other titles. Other software is distributed to users based on the unique needs of learners and courses. The software is professionally installed on University owned computers, or it may be accessed via an internet connection to special VCSU servers that host and execute the software.

Internet Access to Electronic Library Subscriptions

Web based servers provide registered students with convenient access to nearly all of the subscription based, electronic journals of the VCSU Library. This service extends valuable library resources to online students and to students studying off campus.

Campus Connections for Administrative Computing

Campus Connections is a North Dakota University System administrative computing service that provides all students with internet access to class registration, class schedules, grades, fee statements, and financial aid award statements.

Interactive Video Services

Some classes use internet based, two-way interactive video to provide real-time collaboration with other students and professionals at multiple locations. The North Dakota Interactive Video Network (IVN) is a high quality system used primarily for the delivery of entire courses. IVN classrooms are typically designed and equipped to be used exclusively for interactive video conferencing, especially when multiple sites are involved.

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Notebook Computers

Every full time, on-campus student is issued a notebook computer for the entire semester. Every student enrolled in the VCSU elementary education program at the NDSU campus, regardless of part time or full time status, is issued a notebook computer for the entire semester. A student's major(s) declared and on record within Campus Connections will dictate whether a Mac or a PC is issued. A list of majors and their designation as Mac or PC is available on the Technology Services web site.

Depending on the amount of technology fee paid as part of normal course registration, some part time and off-campus students qualify to receive a notebook computer on a full time basis at no extra charge. If they do not qualify under the no-additional-fee provision, part time students may elect to pay an additional fee in order to have a computer issued to them on a full-time basis. The rules and process for full-time computer access by part time students is available at the VCSU Technology Service Desk or online (http://www.vcsu.edu/documents/policymanual/vp.htm?p=450). (http://www.vcsu.edu/documents/policymanual/vp.htm?p=450)

Finally, part time students have the following two options to gain access to a notebook computer at no additional fee:

1. Checkout a computer from the Technology Service Desk as needed for coursework and as available for homework, or
2. Share a computer with one other part time student who agrees to joint responsibility.

All users participating in the notebook initiative get new computers every 24–36 months, and software is upgraded at least annually. Notebook computer access includes Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel), video-production, and antivirus software; a computer carrying case; and a computer-exchange service in case of damage or corruption. All VCSU graduates participating in the notebook computer initiative have the option to purchase the computer at the end of each lease.

On-Campus IT Services

In addition to notebook computers, classes and workshops held on the VCSU campus and at extended campus classroom locations in Fargo have access to the following IT services:

Smart Classrooms

Classrooms are equipped to take advantage of the notebook computers. A typical classroom includes tables, chairs, network and electrical connections for every student, a networked laser printer, a LCD projector, an interactive whiteboard, and other audio/video equipment.

Network Connections

Notebook computers can connect to the internet via Ethernet or cutting edge wireless. A fiber optic backbone network connects all buildings. There are approximately twice as many high speed, end-user, Ethernet connections as people. Wireless access points provide service throughout campus. Broadband connectivity is available off-campus from a variety of local internet service providers.

IT Equipment Checkout

Digital video cameras, digital still cameras, LCD projectors, amplified speakers, and document scanners are available for periodic checkout from the Technology Service Desk. This is a free service to all users.

Effects of World-Class Technology

This rich technology environment has enabled a transformation of nearly all aspects of the learning environment. Faculty have become proficient at integrating technology in instruction, including online environments. Students are more involved in the learning process as they use their computers to take notes, conduct research, communicate, create, and solve problems. Some students develop electronic portfolios that demonstrate abilities not documented on a resume or transcript. The campus web site has become the preferred campus information system, and in many cases the only source of particular information. Multiple surveys, conducted over several years, provide evidence that students, faculty, and staff believe the information technology at VCSU provides a more effective learning environment.