

Computer Information

At this time, the University of Charleston **does not require** students to purchase computers. While UC does offer access to computers through college computer labs, a student may find it more convenient to bring his/her own computer to campus. University Computing offers the following guidelines for those who choose to bring a computer to campus.

The Schoenbaum Library and the main floor of Geary Student Union, as well as various other spots throughout campus, offer wireless Internet access and an increasing number of instructors use computers in their curriculum. Therefore, students usually will find a laptop computer more desirable than a desktop unit. Additionally, laptops take up much less space and better facilitate collaboration with fellow students. We recommend the following as **minimum** specifications to look for when purchasing a new laptop:

- Windows XP Home
- Contemporary Pentium, Celeron, Athlon or Turion processor
- 1 GB of RAM
- 60 GB hard drive (larger recommended for heavy multi-media use)
- CD-RW drive (CDRW/DVD combo recommended)
- Ethernet adaptor
- WIFI compatible 802.11b or 802.11b/g wireless network adaptor (required for wireless Internet access)

Although these specifications suffice for today, it is important to remember that you will likely want to use this laptop throughout college. Due to the ever-changing nature of personal computer technology, there is no guarantee of the lifespan of such a machine. **Purchasing a laptop computer with higher specifications is advised to maximize its useable lifetime.** It is also advisable to get more than the standard one-year warranty that comes with many computers. This is especially true of laptop computers. They can be prohibitively expensive to repair.

Should you decide to purchase a desktop computer, the guidelines above still apply for **minimum** specifications, although a wireless network adaptor is not needed. **As with a laptop computer, purchasing a desktop computer with higher specifications will lengthen the useable lifetime of your purchase.**

Also, it is highly recommended that students in **technology intensive majors** such as Computer Information Systems, Information Technology, Art & Design, and Mass Communications purchase a computer with specifications higher than those listed above. **Consider doubling the RAM and hard drive space as well as upgrading to a DVD burner.**

UC has adopted **Microsoft Office 2003** as the campus standard for document creation. **Office 2003 Standard for Students and Teachers** retails for approximately \$130.00 - \$150.00 and can be purchased at local software and office supply stores.

If you choose the **Apple Macintosh** platform as an alternative to Windows, to insure compatibility with campus computers, Office 2004 for Mac is **strongly recommended**. **Office 2004 for Mac Student and Teacher Edition** retails for approximately \$130.00 - \$150.00 and can be purchased along with a Mac computer or from online stores that handle Mac products.

We also recommend the purchase of a **USB pen or keychain storage device**. These storage devices are far more reliable than floppy disks, hold far more information and can be used with all public access computers on campus.

Dell Computer Corporation offers UC students discounted pricing. Visit **dell.com/edu/email** or call **1-866-328-1898** and reference **Member ID US22331769**.

Should you have questions regarding a new computer purchase feel free to contact the University Computing Help Desk via e-mail at help@ucwv.edu or by phone at 304-357-4874. The technology staff will be glad to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Miller", enclosed within a thin vertical rectangular border.

Ken Miller
Director of University Computing