Computer Use at Colby
and Purchase Recommendations for First-Year and Continuing Students

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Most Important Information

• Your computer should be running a fairly current version of its operating system. That is Mac OS X 10.8 or higher. Windows users should be running Windows 7 or higher.
• You should have a manufacturer’s extended warranty of at least 3 years on your computer. Support is provided for properly functioning hardware and operating systems but not their repair. The Manufacturer’s extended warranty needs to cover these.
• We provide Microsoft Office so you should avoid purchasing an extra copy.

What To Expect This Fall

We in Colby’s Information Technology Services department look forward to the arrival of the Colby Class of 2019 on Tuesday, September 1, 2015. We will be ready to assist with computer network configuration and final software installation on that day. Look for us wearing our Colby Computer Connection 2015 shirts. On September 7 & 8, the day before the start of classes, we will again have response teams to help new and returning students with last minute computer set up problems. Our objective is to have all student-owned computers in the residence halls fully operational before classes start. Microsoft Office can be installed over the network during the summer and after arrival on campus using the links on the Class of 2019 tab in the portal: my.colby.edu

Computer Information

• Computer ownership is not required but 98% of students bring one, almost always a notebook/laptop. Computer labs are available if you shouldn’t have a computer. Lovejoy 400 is open 24/7 while classes are in session.
• When buying a computer, focus on support: how will the manufacturer fix hardware and operating system problems? Make sure that at least 3-years of support from the manufacturer are included in the purchase.
• Macintosh (10.8 and higher) and Windows (Windows 7 and higher) are equally usable; at least 4GB of ram. Over 70% of students now bring a Macintosh to Colby. Linux is not supported by the College except in specialized labs on campus.
• Make sure the notebook/laptop computer has a video output port for connecting to classroom technology.
• Why not an iPad or other small tablet? While these and other handheld devices are very useful, they are unlikely to be adequate without also having a conventional computer. A basic notebook computer and an iPad is an attractive, though expensive, configuration. There is only very basic support available for handhelds: wireless network connection and configuration for connection to Colby Apps email and calendar.
• A printer is optional. The College does not provide computers or printers in the residence halls, so it is very convenient to have a personal printer. Laser printers in the general clusters are available 24 hours a day and there is currently no charge for b/w printing. Color laser printing is available at a charge (currently $.20/side)
• You do not need to buy Microsoft Office – the College licenses every student to use MS Office, which can be downloaded from the Colby network (see the Class of 2019 tab in the MyColby portal – my.colby.edu) or, if necessary, stop by SCS in Lovejoy 120 to have Office installed.
• Will I have to delete Office when I graduate? Maybe. Microsoft is in the process of transforming the way Office is provided to customers, apparently transitioning from locally installed software on a computer to a remotely hosted subscription service. Beginning in 2017, and affecting the Class of 2019, Office may become a subscription service that ends at some point after graduation. If this happens, students will be advised well ahead of time regarding strategies for maintaining access to the Microsoft Office suite and to documents that have been created using it.
• Backup your documents by copying them to your Colby-provided network storage or to a USB drive. Or you can subscribe to a commercial backup service such as iDrive, Carbonite, Crashplan, etc.
• Anti-virus software, regularly updated, is required. Mac and Windows system updates must be installed.
• Residence halls are fully networked with wired ports and wireless. The wireless network is throughout campus.
• The Network Access Control (NAC) system is in the residence halls. You will need to register your computer when you first connect in the residence hall.
• Copyright infringement is illegal. Use of peer-to-peer file sharing of music, video, software, images or other items in a manner that infringes copyright can lead to legal action by the copyright owner.
• Know your rights and responsibilities. Read Colby’s policies and advice related to information technology: www.colby.edu/its/policies-and-procedures
• Protect your privacy, especially your account password. Never share it and beware phishing attacks. www.colby.edu/administration_cs/its/support/online_help/phishing.cfm

Where Do Students Get Help With Computer Problems?

Students have several resources available to them to solve computer problems and to get repairs made.

Student Computer Services (SCS) provides support to students in person (Lovejoy 120), by phone (207-859-4224) and by email (scshelp@colby.edu) for network connection, application installation and operation, and general usage assistance.

SCS provides on-site support to students having problems with their computers. It is staffed by students employed by ITS and uses a tracking system that is also accessed by the ITS professional staff to address network and other general problems that may arise. SCS focuses on the Colby-specific support issues that the manufacturer generally cannot address. These are the priorities for SCS support:

• Network Connectivity — verification of correct operation of the student’s computer network (wireless and wired) configuration.
• Application Installation and operation — Microsoft Office installation and support. Assistance with free anti-virus applications.
• SCS employees are prohibited from doing any hardware repair. Any work that entails “opening the computer” or doing more than connecting cables or inserting/removing notebook computer PCMCIA cards must be done by a manufacturer-dispatched repair technician or a local service provider.

Local computer stores - Expedited service, including out-of-warranty work, usually for a parts and labor fee, can be obtained from a local computer store: www.colby.edu/administration_cs/its/support/online_help/local-repair-vendors.cfm

The Computer Manufacturer (Apple, Dell, etc.) We recommend that you purchase an extended support contract when you buy a new computer. Since we are unable to provide operating system or hardware support this will allow students to get timely support if there are issues with their computer.

Students Are Important Participants in Colby’s Green Computing Initiative

Students, faculty, and staff at Colby are working in many ways to reduce the adverse impact of our campus community on the environment. The Environmental Advisory Group, on which students have provided important leadership, has consolidated recommendations in many areas of campus life, including information technology, and you will be hearing lots more from them. As you make decisions regarding computer purchases it is worth keeping these computing-related issues in mind. For more information: www.colby.edu/administration_cs/its/support/online_help/green_computing.cfm

Need More Information?

If you have questions about Colby’s information technology environment or need general advice on making a purchasing decision prior to September 1, 2015, please send email to computer-advice@colby.edu or call Paula Lemar at 207-859-4206. You are also welcome to contact me directly during the summer or any time during the academic year (e-mail: Ray.Phillips@colby.edu; phone 207-859-4209).

Welcome to the Colby Community!