

The EDUCAUSE* Student Guide to Evaluating Information Technology on Campus

(What you need to know and what you should ask when choosing a college or university!)

*EDUCAUSE, a non-profit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology, developed this guide in cooperation with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Its purpose is to assist prospective students in choosing a college or university with the technological sophistication that best meets their needs. You can find other useful tips and data, including comparative information on specific technology issues for different types of colleges and universities, at: www.educause.edu/studentguide.

SECTION 1 – Academic Technologies: Bringing Students, Faculty, and Information Together

Coursework

? How does the campus use technology to enhance teaching and learning in your areas of interest?

➔ B-W utilizes the Blackboard Learning System, the most widely-adopted course management system among U.S. colleges and universities. It allows instructors and students the ability to share materials and communicate electronically. Faculty also have access to ITec, the Instructional Technology Education Center at B-W. The Center is designed to assist faculty with integrating technology into teaching. Other tools are available at the Center for faculty to utilize in the classroom, such as CRS (Classroom Response Systems), StarBoards/SmartBoards, streaming audio/video, electronic simulations, Bluetooth presentation tablets, video conferencing, and other high-tech products.

? Is there technology in the classrooms?

➔ Yes! Nearly every classroom at B-W is equipped with a fixed multimedia podium which includes a networked computer, DVD/CD drive, ceiling-mounted projector, Internet access, and audio/video tools. In addition, 18 classrooms are equipped with PC workstations for each student. All classrooms are supported with wireless technology.

? Will you use technology to collaborate with other students in both your introductory and advanced courses?

➔ Yes! Each instructor who chooses to utilize the Blackboard Learning System by “turning on” their course facilitates online communication – allowing students to engage with both the instructor and other classmates. Some features include a digital drop box, threaded discussion boards, and a virtual classroom. Beginning in Fall 2007, all instructors will post their syllabus on Blackboard and submit grades to the Registrar via Blackboard.

? Does the school give credit for courses taken online from other institutions and sources of instruction?

➔ Credit transferred from any other institution or program is at the discretion of the College Registrar and would need to be approved. Please contact the [Office of Registration and Records](#) for specific information.

Support Services

? Does the school have multimedia labs you can use to work on projects? Is there help available?

➔ Yes! A student multimedia lab can be found next to B-W's main 24/7 student computing lab located in the Math & Computer Science Building (one of 27 computing labs across campus). The lab is equipped for video & audio editing and digitizing, streaming media, DVD creation and copying, PDF file creation, image manipulation, scanning, and copying. A lab assistant is on duty in the multimedia lab most days from Noon until Midnight Sundays through Thursdays, with the lab closing earlier in the evening on Fridays and Saturdays.

? Are library collections and resources—such as catalogs, research databases, special collections, course reserves, full-text electronic journals, books, and streaming media—available online and accessible from off-campus?

➔ Yes! B-W's Ritter Library catalog, as well as other OPAL library catalogs and OhioLINK catalogs are all searchable online from on- or off-campus. Additional research databases are also available and searchable by subject heading (e.g., Biology).

? What technology resources and help are available to students with special needs?

➔ Accommodations for students with special needs are handled on a personal and individual basis by the B-W Coordinator of Disability Services. A Braille printer is available in one of the campus labs.

? Can the library deliver documents to you electronically, either via e-mail, file transfer, or through Web posting? Is there a cost associated with that service?

➔ The majority of our journals (approximately 25,000 subscriptions) are available electronically online via our suite of 256 databases. Articles can be searched via topic, called up on screen, and printed. Our newest inter-loan library system, Odyssey, allows file sharing of scanned articles between Ohio libraries. Students may request an article which is typically delivered in 2-3 days. Printed articles may be picked up at Ritter Library and incur a charge of \$2.00 each.

? What kind of help does the library provide for research assistance, and when is the help available?

➔ Reference Librarians are available in-person at the Ritter Library reference desk, via telephone, via e-mail, and via scheduled one-on-one appointments. Hours of service are: Mon-Thurs 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.; Fridays 8:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.; Saturdays 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.; Sundays 12:30 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.

Graduation & Career

? Does the campus offer general or profession-specific training programs that will ensure you are fluent in current information technologies when you graduate?

➔ Many faculty use technology to assist with teaching and encourage students to use the technology related to their field of study. Any discipline-specific training and fluency is determined by the individual academic department. If software is required for industry-related competencies

(e.g., SPSS data analysis in social science fields), it is purchased and available for those students at the request of the department chairperson. Various B-W grants are available to faculty for the purpose of learning and incorporating emerging technologies into their teaching.

SECTION 2 – The Administrative Experience: Taking Care of Business Online

Conducting Business: Registration, Transcripts, Payments, etc.

Which of the following can you do online:

? Check admissions status?

➔ Yes! Prospective students can create an account and apply to B-W online. Application status, information, and updates can be viewed at anytime by logging into the account.

? View current account balance due?

➔ This is a new online feature that is in-process and will be available very soon.

? Pay bills?

➔ Yes! Bills can be paid online with a credit card via the Bursar's online site.

? Apply for and view financial aid status and awards?

➔ Yes! Students must complete the government's FAFSA application to be eligible for financial aid. The B-W Financial Aid Office has all necessary forms, information, and links available online via their departmental Web site. Once application is made for financial aid, each student is sent a link to view their award online.

? Register for, add, and drop courses?

➔ Yes! B-W utilizes WebExpress for online registration and administration. All students (except first semester freshmen) can register for classes online during the stated registration period. Adding and dropping classes can also be done online during the eligible timeframe, otherwise must be done via a student's academic advisor or the Registrar's Office.

? View course grades?

➔ Yes! Students may view their grades via WebExpress online.

? Print unofficial transcripts?

➔ Yes! Students may print unofficial transcripts via WebExpress online.

? Check progress toward degree completion requirements?

➔ Yes! Students may view their individual degree audit status online via WebExpress.

? View the College catalog?

➔ Yes! The B-W online catalog includes course descriptions, degree requirements, academic policies, the academic calendar, and much more. It can be found on the Registration and Records departmental Web site.

Personal Information, Privacy, & Security

? What personal information can you view or update online?

➔ At the beginning of each semester, students must complete an online “Check-In” process which gives them the opportunity to edit all of their personal contact information. Students can then view their personal profile (name, address, phone, major, e-mail address, advisor, academic program, etc.) on WebExpress at anytime, however, students cannot edit the information. Students must contact the office of Registration and Records to have the information changed.

? What security and privacy policies are in place to protect student information?

➔ All employees of the College who access student records and sensitive data are required to sign a FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) agreement. Access to sensitive data is granted on a ‘need-to-know’ basis to staff. Social Security numbers are masked in the system and are only viewable by a very select number of essential staff. Screens with grades are also given extra security. Faculty and staff are warned about not storing any sensitive data on laptop computers.

? How does the campus educate students about and protect them from identity theft?

➔ All new students receive a copy of B-W’s “Interactive Guide to Student Computing” CD. The CD is an audio/visual tutorial designed to help students learn, understand, and navigate the B-W computing network. One section of the CD addresses the issue of identity theft and offers helpful advice on preventing this crime.

? How does the campus notify students of their rights under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)?

➔ A letter is mailed to each student in August notifying them of their FERPA rights. In addition, these guidelines are also posted on the Registration & Records Departmental Web site.

SECTION 3 – Student Life:

Enriching Your Extra-Curricular Experiences with Technology

Accessing Computer Services

? What public access for computing is available to students? (Examples include computing labs, cyber cafés, residence-hall computers, etc.)

➔ 27 Computer Labs (two with 24-hour access) are located across campus housing more than 550 computers. A cyber café is located in the student union and provides a coffee house atmosphere with 16 computer stations.

? Does the campus provide wireless network coverage? If so, how much of the campus has wireless connectivity?

➔ Yes! Wireless connectivity is available in all academic buildings, residence halls, and most outdoor gathering spots on campus.

? Does the campus provide institutional e-mail accounts for all students and use e-mail as an official means of communication?

➔ Yes! Students are issued a B-W e-mail/network account at orientation. E-mail is used to send campus bulletins, to communicate with instructors, receive information regarding registration and financial aid, etc. E-Mail is the official means of communication between the college and the students.

? How does the campus manage e-mail spam and spyware?

➔ B-W utilizes a Barracuda spam filter that sits before the Internet connection and eliminates the overwhelming majority of spam traffic hitting the network. The College provides students with free anti-virus software and instructions on how to download additional anti-spyware products that will help to eliminate those threats.

? Does the campus provide and support electronic space for personal student Web pages?

➔ Yes! Each student is allotted 100 MB of network storage space for e-mail, personal Web pages, and file storage.

? Is network bandwidth limited for peer-to-peer software, gaming, Web cams, or other programs requiring high levels of network services?

➔ Not always. If select services (such as peer-to-peer sharing programs) appear to be causing high traffic problems on the network and monopolizing bandwidth, those programs may have some limits applied (typically on outgoing traffic) to correct the problem.

? Is there a campus code of behavior about using computer resources?

➔ Yes! Students are required to adhere to the guidelines specified in the “Responsible Use of Technology Resources” document, found on the IT Web site. New students, when registering their computers to the B-W network, must read the policy and agree to its conditions prior to gaining network access.

? Does the campus have policies addressing peer-to-peer file sharing, computer viruses, and copyright violations?

➔ Yes! On the IT Web site, you will find the College’s “File Sharing Policy” (addressing peer-to-peer applications), the “Res Net Virus Policy” and the “B-W Intellectual Property Rights” document which covers copyright violations.

Connecting With Others

? Is contact information for students, faculty, and staff readily accessible electronically?

➔ Yes! When students log in to the Yellow Jacket Portal (campus intranet) they will find secure links to search campus e-mail addresses and phone numbers for faculty, staff, and other resident students.

? Does the campus make online communities available (for example, forums, bulletin boards, and so forth)?

➔ Yes! As part of the campus portal system, each member of the B-W community is assigned a “role” (e.g., student, staff member, etc.). Specific features of the portal are made available to each role. In addition, students may opt into joining online communities such as clubs and student organizations via the portal, thereby receiving information from the groups they choose.

? Are there Web sites for student organizations and clubs?

➔ Any student organization or club that desires to have a Web site is given space on the network for that purpose. It is up to each group to create and maintain its site.

? What technology-supported career-planning services are available for students?

➔ A wide array of career-related technology resources is available to students, including BWCN (the B-W Career Network), which is a web-based platform offering 24/7 access. Via BWCN, students can upload resumes, conduct job searches, apply online, and network with other alumni. Also available are several online databases such as CareerSearch, DISCOVER, and ClevelandIntern.net. Students may also utilize Perfect Interview™, an interactive mock-interview software program.

SECTION 4 – Services & Fees: What You Pay, What You Get

Fees & Expenses

? Is a technology fee is charged by the campus?

➔ No! The College does not charge students any additional fees for technology or computing.

? Will you be required to purchase your own computer equipment and software?

➔ No! Most students do opt to purchase their own personal computer, however it is not required. (Over 90% of residential students currently bring a personal computer to campus.) There are many public lab computers readily available for student use.

? Does the campus make computing and network access financially accessible?

➔ Yes! There are no computing or network access fees charged.

? Is special student pricing offered for computers and peripheral equipment?

➔ Yes! As licensed Dell and Apple reps, the College is able to pass along student pricing on computers, (some) software, and peripheral equipment. This is handled through the B-W Bookstore.

Technical Support

? What hardware and software standards, if any, does the campus require, recommend, and/or support?

➔ Students may refer to the IT Web site and view the “[Network Specification Requirements for Computers Brought on Campus](#)” document in order to verify the compatibility of their computer with the B-W network. Computers that fail to meet the minimum specifications may not operate properly on the network.

? What kinds of support services (help desk, training, troubleshooting) are provided by the campus, and when are they available?

➔ The IT HelpDesk is the primary resource for student computing assistance. The HelpDesk performs primarily telephone support, but is also available for walk-in consultation. Most student questions and concerns can be handled over the phone by the HelpDesk staff. [Online assistance from the HelpDesk](#) is available on the intranet portal, as well. [The Interactive Guide to Student Computing CD](#), given to all B-W students, also contains extensive tutorials to assist with computing matters. Lab assistants are available in some of the computing labs.

? Does the campus have a plan for keeping its hardware and software current, and if so, what is the replacement cycle?

➔ The College does not have an official computer replacement cycle. Hardware and software upgrades and replacements are made on an as-needed basis, depending on the locations and users. B-W prides itself on equipping its classrooms, labs, and offices with current and sophisticated technology products and monitoring future trends and requirements, acting upon those changes when dictated, to the benefit of the campus community.

? If you bring your own computer to school, what kind of technical support can you expect from the campus?

➔ Our ResNet program is designed to help students get connected to the B-W network. Wireless set-up assistance is provided for free. For other questions and concerns, the HelpDesk is merely a phone call away. Students requiring more than consultative assistance also have some services available to them at the HelpDesk (e.g., operating system reload, virus removal) for a small fee.

Other Services

? What campus and community services are covered by debit-card, smart-card, or one-card systems?

➔ B-W students utilize a one-card system for many services on campus. The student “Jacket Express” ID cards can be used for: access into residence halls and other secure areas; buying books and merchandise at the College Bookstore; purchasing food at the Student Union, Cyber Café, or Jacket Junction (dining services); payment in food/drink vending machines and laundry machines; charging IT repair services at the HelpDesk; fees incurred at the Health Center; equipment rental or deposits for use at the Rec Center; and more. Some local restaurant merchants will accept the Jacket Express cards as payment for services, as well.

? How does the campus support printing for students, and is there a charge for this service?

➔ All campus computing labs offer **free** (black & white) printing to students. Color printing is available for a fee.

? What security measures are provided by the institution's IT department and what will be the student's responsibility (for example, antivirus software)?

➔ The IT Department takes every precaution possible to provide a safe and secure network computing environment for the campus community. **Free** anti-virus software is provided to all students at B-W. The College also enforces a ResNet (residential network) Virus Policy and enforces the consequences to any student perpetuating viruses on the network.

? Does the campus include the cost of technical accessories (for example, a technology-enabled note-taking pen that provides an interface to a CMS) in its technology fee, or are students required to purchase these items separately?

➔ B-W does not charge a computing fee to students. Classrooms are nicely equipped to facilitate networked computing and faculty have access to technology that can be integrated into the classroom to enhance learning (e.g., CRS – Classroom Response Systems). The IT Department provides training and equipment for faculty without charge. Other personal computing devices, technical accessories, or peripherals required in the classroom would be at the discretion of each individual instructor, but those demands are rarely placed upon students.

? Does the campus support the purchase and use of e-textbooks? Do the baseline hardware and software standards support this technology?

➔ The use of e-texts is beginning to filter into the curriculum at B-W. Some instructors are now choosing to use e-textbooks instead of traditional hard-copy texts. The e-texts represent a significant cost-savings to students. Because B-W requires minimum specifications for student computers brought to campus, any student's PC should be sufficient to access materials contained in the e-texts.