

Dear Students:

Happy Tuesday! As we are working through our extended spring break and preparing for online instruction to begin again next week, I wanted to take this opportunity to give you some important information about a Technology Check-Out Program, internet access, and more.

Technology Check-Out Program

- We know that technology needs are first and foremost in your minds for many of you. We are here to help!
- A limited number of laptops, Chromebooks, and iPad Airs are available for loan through the end of the semester. We will distribute those devices on Friday, March 27 from 9AM -11AM on the Parkland Campus. To minimize COVID19 impact, this will be a drive-up style pick up at the Student Union circle drive by the bus stop.
- In order to get one of these devices, you must email librarytech@parkland.edu with your name, student ID number, and which type of device(s) you are willing to accept by 5 PM Thursday night. We will strive to provide you with your first choice, but due to limited numbers, you may be offered your second or third choice.
- A library staff member will email you to confirm your request. Please do not come to campus on Thursday if you have not received that confirmation email.
- Pickup on Friday March 27, 9AM-11AM
 - You must present your photo ID to pick up the device on Thursday at the circle drive in front of the Student Union.
 - Stay in your vehicle; we will verify your ID and hand you your device.
- All devices will be due back to the library by May 15, 2020.

Internet Options

We have been gathering some information that we have come across with regards to internet options for our students. Parkland is not affiliated with any of these entities and this information is not intended to be an official offer from any of these companies.

- **AT&T** – Please click [here](https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html) (<https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html>) for their official policies and offers.
 - AT&T is expanding “Access from AT&T,” our low-cost home internet offering to qualifying households AT&T will continue to offer internet access for qualifying limited income households at \$10 a month through our Access from AT&T program.
 - They’ve expanded eligibility to Access from AT&T to households participating in the National School Lunch Program and Head Start.
 - Additionally, they are offering new Access for AT&T customers two months of free service.
 - All AT&T consumer home internet wireline customers can use unlimited internet data.
 - AT&T is redirecting more resources to provide communication services and tools for first responders, health care professionals, educators and

other essential customers. This additional support will help ensure these customers can continue providing critical support to the country and their communities, particularly to first responders using the FirstNet network.

- **Spectrum Free Broadband** – Click [here](#) (for the official details regarding this plan).
 - Spectrum is offering free internet to students in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.
 - Starting March 16, 2020 the company will offer free broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription.
 - Installation fees may be waived for new student households.
 - Phone: 1-844-488-8395.
- **Comcast** – Please click [here](https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more) (<https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more>) for official Comcast information.
 - Comcast is taking steps to implement the following new policies for the next 60 days, and other important initiatives:
 - Comcast has opened their Home Hotspot network for all non-Comcast customers. If you rent router/WiFi equipment from Comcast, you can enable it to help out those around you in this unprecedented time of need. Comcast promotes it as secure and will not impact your own network experience. Plus, they have removed any network caps for the next two months. Considering all Illinois schools will be closing for the next few weeks, sharing your resources with your neighbors could help students out (regardless if they are our specific students). Please consider turning this option on at the following: <https://www.xfinity.com/support/articles/disable-xfinity-wifi-home-hotspot>
 - Xfinity WiFi Free For Everyone: Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free – including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi. Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the “xfinitywifi” network name in the list of available hotspots, and then launch a browser.
 - Pausing Our Data Plan: With so many people working and educating from home, we want our customers to access the internet without thinking about data plans. While the vast majority of our customers do not come close to using 1TB of data in a month, we are pausing our data plans for 60 days giving all customers Unlimited data for no additional charge.
 - No Disconnects or Late Fees: We will not disconnect a customer’s internet service or assess late fees if they contact us and let us know that they can’t pay their bills during this period. Our care teams will be available to offer flexible payment options and can help find other solutions.
 - News, Information and Educational Content on X1 and Flex: For those with school-age students at home, we’ve created new educational collections for all grade levels in partnership with Common Sense Media.

Just say “education” into your X1 or Flex voice remote. To help keep customers informed, we also have created a collection of the most current news and information on Coronavirus. Just say “Coronavirus” into your X1 or Flex voice remote.

- 24x7 Network Monitoring: Underpinning all of these efforts, Comcast’s technology and engineering teams will continue to work tirelessly to support our network operations. We engineer our network capacity to handle spikes and shifts in usage patterns, and continuously test, monitor and enhance our systems and network to ensure they are ready to support customer usage. Our engineers and technicians staff our network operations centers 24/7 to ensure network performance and reliability. We are monitoring network usage and watching the load on the network both nationally and locally, and to date it is performing well.
- Mediacom information [here](https://mediacomcable.com/about/news/corona-company-initiatives/) (<https://mediacomcable.com/about/news/corona-company-initiatives/>)
- Information will be forthcoming about the possibility of students gaining internet access in the parking lots at Parkland as well as outdoor internet access in Champaign-Urbana.

Online Learning Transition

- Faculty are working hard to make your courses accessible for you in an online environment. If you haven’t heard from them already, they should be reaching out to you soon with the plans for your specific courses. As those plans get communicated to you and you have additional questions, please contact your instructors and [Counseling Services](http://counselingservices@parkland.edu) (<http://counselingservices@parkland.edu>) for more information.

Commencement

- By now, you have likely heard that we have suspended our May 14th Commencement ceremony. Correspondingly, you can ignore the cap and gown registration processes that I sent you by regular mail earlier in the month. We will not currently be running that process. Once we have developed an alternate completion celebration plan, we will inform you about alternate processes for you to engage in.

In the upcoming days, we will be messaging you about:

- Accessibility Services plans
- Opportunities to chat online with the Academic Deans and other Academic Services leadership
- Financial Aid
- Enrollment processes for Summer and Fall courses

Please continue to check your email daily as it is our most utilized way to communicate with you. You can also find all past COVID19 communications and additional information at our [COVID19 website](http://www.Parkland.edu/covid19) (www.Parkland.edu/covid19).

Sincerely,

Mike Trame
Vice President for Student Services