Group One

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<div align="center">Technology Accessibility among Students</div>

A massive 73% of college students have reported that computers are necessary for studying and completing homework (Laird). Homework assignments are posted online, quizzes are taken on the computer, research is done using Google, and email is necessary for communication with instructors. When it comes down to it, you just can't do college without a computer anymore. To make sure students have access to all of the resources they need, college campuses often have computer labs. Of course, on the campuses of public universities where thousands of students are enrolled, accessibility can still be an issue. Many universities have designed loaner laptop programs to combat this.

The University of Southern California has a laptop loaner program in which currently enrolled students can borrow a laptop, equipped with the same software as campus computers, for a period of four hours. Other colleges allow computers to be borrowed for a longer period of time. For example, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology allows students to borrow a computer for an entire semester at a time. MIT's program gives the effect of owning a laptop and allows for access all of the time. USC's program is more short term, and is designed for students to use with a specific task in mind.

There are benefits to both the short and long term loaner programs. One perk of only allowing students to check out the computers for a short period of time is more students can take advantage of the program and get access to the technology they need. On the other hand, it is

more convenient for students to have a computer they can depend on for the entirety of the semester.

In a perfect world, all students would own laptops. Unfortunately, financial struggles on the part of students and colleges make this impossible. 8.9 million college students are eligible for the Federal Pell Grant, which is granted based on financial need (AdmissionsUSA). At the same time, universities struggle to receive proper funding. Even with full funding, providing a laptop to every student is not realistic. Overall, these loaner programs are a viable solution and should be tailored to fit the needs of students at each university.

There are many non-profit organizations that focus on providing computers to low-income families. Some of these programs provide computers for free, and other at low cost. There is an application process for each of these programs, wherein you describe your financial situation, why you need the computer, and more. Unfortunately, this means that many students will not qualify for free or reduced price computers. These organizations offer a great service, but they cannot hold the burden of providing technology to the massive amount of college students in need.

Universities should be responsible for fulfilling students' needs on campus. They take this seriously when it comes to housing and food, and should also with technology. Students at most universities are required to pay a technology fee. Revenue gained from technology fees are generally used to purchase and maintain software in student labs, printing on campus, IT Support, and more ("At IU Bloomington, How Is the Student Technology Fee Used?"). When a student pays these fees, they can reasonably expect to be able to take advantage of campus technology when necessary. Of course, student technology fees need to be kept affordable for

students. As a result, universities still struggle to provide enough technology on campus in many

cases. Instead of purchasing computers for student use, colleges often have to ask for donations

and reuse whatever technology that is available.

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