

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

AS-3458-20/FA (Rev)
November 5-6, 2020

DISPARATE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON UNDERSERVED STUDENTS

- RESOLVED:** That the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) strongly encourages all California State Universities and the CSU Chancellor's Office to acknowledge that COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities in access to technology for students; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That the ASCSU recognize that the use of digital technologies at the CSU is likely to remain at an increased level following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That the ASCSU urge the CSU System to work systematically and thoughtfully to ensure that all CSU students have adequate and robust access to appropriate digital technologies and to eliminate any inequities in such access; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** The ASCSU ask that the CSU System and individual campuses work together to ensure all students have equivalent access to all technologies needed for them to succeed; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the Governor of California, CSU Board of Trustees, CSU Chancellor, CSU campus Presidents, CSU campus Senate Chairs, CSU campus Instructional Technology Committees, CSU Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, California Faculty Association (CFA), California State Student Association (CSSA), CSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty & Staff Association (CSU-ERFSA), and California State Assembly members Lorena Gonzalez, Kevin Mullin, Robert Rivas, and Miguel Santiago.

RATIONALE: *According to an October 8, 2020 report by CalMatters¹, at least 100,000 working-class students in California do not have access to internet. According to the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Consortium's August 2020 report on the impact of COVID-19 on First Generation College students², "were significantly ($p < .05$) more likely to report that they lacked access to an appropriate study space amid distracting home environments, lacked access to technology necessary for online leaning, and lacked familiarity with technical tools necessary to online learning.*

¹Domingo, J, Karim, S., & West, D. (2020) "Report: More than 100,000 low-income California college students lack internet access." CalMatters.

² Soria, K. M., Horgos, B., Chirikov, I., & Jones-White, D. (2020). First-generation students' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. SERU Consortium, University of California -Berkeley and University of Minnesota.

Additionally, first-generation students were significantly ($p < .05$) more likely than continuing-generation students to report that they were unable to attend virtual classes at their scheduled meeting times (22% compared to 14%)” (p. 7).

A September 2020 report by SERU also had similar findings for students from “low-income/poor and working-class backgrounds” with fully 53% of those students reporting they did not have access to the technology needed for online learning³. Recent research by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC)⁴ (March, 2019) showed just how deep the technology divide was for California college students, noting, only 54% to 67% of working-class/low-income African American and Latinx households had internet, with many of those households relied on cellphones for internet access. According to this report, 44% of households surveyed cited cost as a barrier to internet access.

This unequal access is further exacerbated by immigrant status. According to the September 3, 2020, Migration Policy Institute analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on immigrant’s digital access, “[o]ne-tenth of families headed by Hispanic immigrants had no access to the internet in 2016, which was greater than the 7% of U.S.-born Latinos without access and twice the rate of non-Hispanic White residents”.

Much of this lack of access is related to the other inequities the pandemic has laid bare or caused, such as job loss, housing insecurity, food insecurity, etc. While there is clearly a concerted effort on the part of individual campuses to help alleviate some aspects of food insecurity for students, these efforts do little to assist students with costly technologies. While some campuses are spending money to try to provide students with laptops and hot spots, the costs associated with this can run in the millions, putting significant strain on CSUs that are already feeling the brunt of COVID-19 related economic downturn and the loss of revenue from campus housing, etc.

We ask the CSU as a system to work to find a solution that does not place the burden on students and their families, that does not place further burdens on faculty and staff, and that does not place additional burdens on individual campuses. The CSU System is the largest university system in the nation⁵ and should be able to leverage its largess to work with internet providers, computer manufactures, and software developers to provide equitable access to all CSU students.

Approved – January 21-22, 2021

³ Soria, K. M., & Horgos, B. (2020). *Social class differences in students’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic*. SERU Consortium, University of California - Berkeley and University of Minnesota.

⁴ Goss, J., Lee, C., & Gao, N. (2019). *California’s Digital Divide*. Public Policy Institute of California.

⁵ <https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/about-the-csu/facts-about-the-csu/Pages/introduction.aspx>