

## Improving Technology

Keeping technology up-to-date is a key aspect of the University. With updated technology, students and employees are able to perform tasks more easily and efficiently. The Information Technology (IT) department is constantly working to improve existing technology on campus, with the current focus on overhauling current wireless technology and adding a second internet connection.



Mark Lumsden, Chief Information Officer says, “Our wireless connectivity is old technology from when wireless first came out and the coverage is poor, especially in the residence halls. We knew these needed to be upgraded, but before we could look at making these updates, we needed funding.”

The project recently found funding through the sale of IP addresses the University owned but isn’t using. This provided enough capital for the update of the wireless connections in Pierce, White, Grand, and Liberty Halls, as well as the suites.

To begin the upgrade, IT will need to make plans for each building by doing a site survey. Gavin Freking, Systems Administrator, has been working through online courses which will aid in this process. Performing these site surveys will offer a better understanding of where the best access points in each building are.

“Since the campus is closed due to COVID-19, the project has been slowed a bit. We are still able to go in on nights and weekends when nobody is in the buildings and we look at how we can rewire and where to place the access points that mount in the wall,” says Lumsden. “Each building will be different, with Pierce and White Halls being more difficult since they are built out of concrete.”

The current wireless access points in the residence halls are located in the hallways which limits the coverage in each room. The new boxes will be mounted high on the wall in each room and

will have a wireless and wired access point. Although most students operate on wireless, the University understands that some students, such as gamers, prefer to be wired in.

The other big aspect to offering the best internet service to our campus involves setting up internet redundancy. Currently the Storm Lake campus operates on a 1 Gb fiber connection through Iowa Communications Network, but IT is looking to add another 1 Gb connection through Long Lines.

With more and more campus operations moving to cloud-based services, including JRM, Office 365, and Canvas, it is important there is a secondary internet connection if one goes down. In the past year, the campus lost internet connection twice for almost a full day, which impedes campus operations. The internet traffic will be split between the two services, and if one goes down, they will all be moved to the working connection.

Both of these projects, along with other IT initiatives, are aimed to bring BVU into the twenty-first century with the technology we offer to students, faculty, and staff. Students can look forward to an updated wireless experience when they return for the Fall 2020 semester.

**Initiative:** Improve technology, campus-wide and OSG

**Initiative Description:**

1. Implement a mobile app for prospective students, current students, alumni, and community to improve communication
2. Implement a print/copy/scan management solution to improve printing capabilities and lower the overall cost of printing for the university
3. Upgrade to an intuitive, better designed ERP platform that provides easy-to-use registration tools and clearly outlined degree-completion tools
4. Improve wireless connectivity across campus and in the residence halls.

**Success Metric:** Student satisfaction survey shows increased scores in areas that were weak when the technology survey was conducted in 2018.

**Initiative Owner:** Chief Information Officer

**Cabinet Sponsor:** Vice President for Finance and Administration