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We at the Frist Nursing Informatics Center (FNIC) would like to help better prepare you for your experience at Vanderbilt by sharing an overview of our computing environment:

Managing information is a central role for nursing at all levels. The science of finding, organizing, sharing, and adding to information – especially with the assistance of technology – is an essential area at VUSN. Consequently, expectations regarding student computer skills are increasing at VUSN. You will be required to use the Internet when you are away from school buildings to communicate with faculty and other students and to access learning resources. You will use email, on-line discussion boards, and file sharing as an integral part of your classroom, clinical, and research experience. You should have the computer skills to negotiate the World Wide Web; download, move and copy files; and utilize word-processing and spreadsheet software. It is important for you to be able to perform these skills before you begin classes. To demonstrate mastery of necessary computer skills, please take our online **Computer Skills Exercise**. You will find this exercise and more information about technology at VUSN by visiting the **New Student Tech Tools** link on the **Resources for Newly Admitted Students** Web page at <http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/newstu> (or **New Students** under **Quick Links** on the VUSN homepage).

It is strongly recommended that you have a home computer, printer, and an Internet service provider, preferably one with high speed Internet access [or Broadband such as cable modem (Comcast) or DSL through your phone company (AT&T), or satellite if those two are not available]. The school considers your Internet communication link to be an essential learning resource. It will be important for you to have a home printer, because printing of school-related assignments is supported free of charge for the first 375 pages per semester; thereafter prints may be purchased on a Commodore card for four (4) cents a copy.

The VUSN computing environment is a Windows environment. If you are considering the purchase of a computer, it might help you to know that the standard configuration of an FNIC lab computer is a 3.2 GHz Pentium 4 processing unit with 1 GB of RAM and a 150 GB hard drive loaded with Windows XP, a 48X CD-RW/DVD-ROM and USB access for a personal thumb drive. The FNIC will support student use of designated communication, word-processing, presentation, spreadsheet, and database software. Our current software-support list includes Internet Explorer 6.x+, Firefox 2.+ and Microsoft Office 2003/2007 Professional (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Access). (**Note:** At this time Vista is not in general use at VUSN, but Vista is supported.)

If you plan to purchase a new computer, we strongly recommend that you buy a computer from a well-known manufacturer. In recent years, the brands bought most frequently at Vanderbilt University Medical Center have been HP, Compaq and Dell. VUSN has wireless networking capabilities in key areas of the school, so you might want to consider purchasing a laptop instead of a desktop computer to take advantage of this resource. In addition, an Ethernet card may be required for fast home Internet access and can be used with network data jacks available in the VUSN student lounge. We recommend 100 Mb integrated Ethernet network cards. Many libraries and other locations around campus also have wireless capability and network data jacks that you can use. For additional information, visit the **New Student Tech Tools** Web page (referred to above).

Students can purchase a license for Microsoft Office at a significant discount through Vanderbilt's participation in Microsoft's Student Select Program (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/its/studentselect/>). Through this program, students will receive a CD but NOT the printed product manuals or technical support. Students can choose Microsoft Office 2007 Professional (*Windows*), which includes Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Access, or Microsoft Office 2008 Professional (*Macintosh*), which includes Word,

Excel, and PowerPoint, at an academic price (currently, \$67.50 for the Windows version; \$58.45 for the Macintosh version). Additionally, the Vanderbilt bookstore also offers software at educational discounts to matriculated students. For information on bookstore software and prices, call (615) 343-4369.

If you are going to live in a Vanderbilt University residential hall, you will be able to establish an Ethernet connection (no modem required) to the Internet and to the campus computer system through **ResNet**. Vanderbilt's department of Information Technology Services (ITS), recommends that you purchase a computer with an integrated Ethernet card. ITS also recommends that students have at least a Windows XP or a Macintosh X operating system. (To obtain information on ResNet, go to <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/resnet/>.)

Some specialty-level students will be required to purchase a PDA (personal digital assistant), depending on their specialty. We support both Palm and Pocket PC operating systems at VUSN. However, PDA requirements may vary by specialty. Some specialty directors will send their students a letter over the summer with PDA hardware and software requirements. If you do not receive such a letter, we suggest that you check with your specialty director for any specific recommendations before making any purchase. Please frequently check the PDA links on our **New Student Tech Tools** Web page for more information and periodic updates regarding specialty requirements..

The University's computer system is called **VUnet**. Once officially matriculated to VUSN and in the Vanderbilt system, you will be able to create a special password and username for this system through a self-service process over the Internet (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/epassword/>). You will then be able to access restricted Vanderbilt resources, such as the library's online databases and e-resources. A VUMC email account will be created for you automatically; it will be activated by the password-creation process above. (The New Student Tech Tools Web page will have more information and updates about email account management.)

If you need experience using the Internet and the Web, sign up soon with an Internet provider for trial Internet service. Be sure to obtain competency in using email, browsing the Web, installing free players, accessing RealVideo and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) files, and downloading files. Visit the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing's Web pages at <http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/> for more information about the school, the Vanderbilt community, and computing at Vanderbilt.

It is important that you see computing as an essential tool in advanced-practice nursing – a tool that you can master and enjoy. We hope you do have time to devote to the preparations that have been recommended – you'll view the investment as well worth it.

The staff of the FNIC look forward to working with you. For additional information, please contact Jerry Murley at jerry.murley@vanderbilt.edu.

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MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT COMPUTING

Expectations for Student Home Computer and Other Resources:

- A multimedia-capable computer with a 2 GHz Intel® Pentium® 4 processor or better
 - With 1GB RAM, 40 GB hard drive, CD, CD-RW or DVD drive
 - With a full duplex sound card and speakers
 - With 65,000-color video display card set to display at 1024x768 or higher
 - With an Ethernet card (built-in wireless capability also recommended that is Cisco compliant)*
 - With Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or later or Macintosh OS X or better**
 - With Microsoft Office 2003 (*Windows*), 2007 (*Windows*), 2004 (*Mac*), or 2008 (*Mac*)
- A reliable Internet provider with Web browsing and email services (AOL is not recommended because of frequent disconnects)
- Cable or DSL Internet service (or if others are not available, Satellite Internet service)
- Shareware/free software:
 - Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.x or better or Netscape 7.x or better or Firefox 2.0 or better
 - RealPlayer Basic Player (<http://www.real.com/>)
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader 8 or better (<http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>)
 - McAfee Anti-Virus (<http://its.vanderbilt.edu/antivirus/downloads.php>)
- Other resources:
 - PDAs: ACNP, ANP, Clinical Management, FNP, NMW, NNP, PMHNP, PNP and WHNP specialty-level students will be required to have a PDA. Please see our **New Student Tech Tools** Web page for general PDA recommendations. Some specialty directors will send their students a letter later in the summer with PDA hardware and software requirements. (**NOTE:** This information does **not** apply to pre-specialty students.)
 - Personal USB drive for moving files from computer to computer (see **New Student Tech Tools**)
 - A printer
 - MP3 players are optional (MP3 files are created for most videotaped lectures)

Expectations for Student Computer Abilities and Skills:***

- Familiarity with common computer terminology (files, Web browsers, RAM, ROM, etc.)
- Ability to input data via a keyboard and mouse
- Ability to open/close programs, save, print, copy, cut and paste files, make attachments to files
- Ability to install programs and manage files
- Ability to access the Internet via modem, send and receive email, download, install, and handle files and graphics from the Internet.

* A fast Internet connection through a cable or telephone company (Broadband) is recommended, especially for **distance students**. The **Informatics specialty** requires Broadband.

** Older **Macintosh computers are not recommended**, but if you have one, it should have at least OS X, 512 MB RAM, 256 MB virtual memory, G4 processor, fast Internet connection, Web Browser: Firefox 2.x+ or IE 5+. (**Macintosh exception:** Users with **newer Intel-based Macintosh computers** OS X 4+ could also acquire and install Parallels and Windows XP for equivalent access to all resources. Remember to install and run separate virus protection and Windows updates on a frequent schedule just as if you owned a non-Apple PC.)

*** For more details, please see the **New Student Tech Tools** Web page introduced on page one of this letter.

Resources for Newly Admitted Students - <http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/newstu>