Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom: A Resource for Faculty
Randolph-Macon College Committee on College Life

Each instructor at Randolph-Macon College is encouraged to craft his or her own policy governing the use of personal electronic devices in his or her classroom, laboratory, and other settings in which he or she is providing instruction. The Committee on College Life recommends that instructors communicate these policies to students by including a statement on Personal Electronic Devices in their course syllabi. When drafting this statement, faculty should take into account their preferences and concerns about the use of cell phones, laptops, tablets, and other devices in class, as well as these considerations:

- Instructors may decide to restrict and may even prohibit the use of electronic devices in certain circumstances. However, instructors should be aware that certain devices may be necessary to provide reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act; in those cases, students desiring accommodation bear the responsibility of providing instructors with documentation from Disability Support Services (DSS), which specify the need for such devices. Instructors with questions or concerns about how to modify policies to allow these accommodations are encouraged to contact the Director of DSS for guidance and information.
- Instructors should ensure that at least one designated electronic device in the classroom, whether the classroom computer (if available) or their own personal device, is enabled to receive messages from R-MC's Text Alert System. Instructors should also be aware that R-MC's student Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are required to carry dedicated devices to receive dispatches during their shifts, which may overlap with class time.
- Instructors should recognize that an increasing number of students are electing to purchase electronic versions of textbooks because of their reduced cost. Instructors should thus take care to ensure that their course policies do not conflict with one another (e.g., mandate that students "bring their books to class" while simultaneously banning the use of personal electronic devices in the classroom). As the use of e-books is only going to increase over time, we recommend that instructors develop policies that allow their use in class.
- Instructors should be mindful of the possibility of alternate or missing pagination in some e-books. We recommend that instructors craft policies giving students the responsibility of appropriately setting up e-book pagination. As of Fall 2012, both Nook and Kindle e-readers offer settings that provide the same pagination as the corresponding printed materials. Moreover, instructors should be informed about (and inform students about) new practices for citing such materials per the standards of their particular discipline.
- Student use of personal electronic devices is governed not only by instructors' individual classroom policies, but by the College's Code of Academic Integrity, Code of Student

Conduct, and Acceptable Use Policy for Computer Resources, all of which can be found in the Student Handbook (http://www.rmc.edu/current-students/handbook/handbook.pdf). Instructors' policies on personal electronic devices should not permit students to use personal electronic devices in ways that violate existing College policies, and instructors should make clear that violations of these policies will be reported to appropriate campus authorities.

- Please keep in mind that personal electronic devices are likely to rapidly evolve as technology advances and markets respond; as a result, the recommendations given here will necessarily have to shift and adapt. The Committee on College Life is committed to re-examining these issues as appropriate, and encourages instructors to do the same.

The Committee would also like to offer the following sample policy; instructors are encouraged to modify it as they see fit.

Personal Electronic Devices: All phones and personal electronic devices should be silenced and put away for the duration of each class session, with the following exceptions:

- You may bring a personal computer, tablet, or other device to class in order to take notes. In this case, you should ONLY use appropriate software to complete this task.
- If there is an electronic version of an assigned text, you may bring a personal computer, tablet, or other device to class in order to refer to the text. Students who use electronic texts are responsible for ensuring that pagination and text structure matches the print version of the book, and that citations in papers or submitted work similarly match the print copy.
- If a student has a legitimate requirement for an electronic device in class -- for example, because of accommodation for a disability, on-call duty as an EMT, etc. -- the student should clear the use of the device with the instructor BEFORE the class session starts.

Under NO circumstances should you be web surfing, texting, checking e-mail, etc. during class. Any student found in violation of these policies will receive a warning for an initial violation; for a second violation, they may be asked to leave the class (and therefore be considered absent). **Accessing your cell phone or other electronic device for any purpose during a quiz, exam, or other in-class graded assignment, without prior instructor approval, will be considered a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity and will be handled according to the Code's procedures.**