

## Brief Broadband Testimony

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I'm Jeffrey L. Medvec, Information Technology Manager for Penn State Fayette – The Eberly Campus. One of my jobs is working with students to meet their technology needs to fulfill their academic requirements. That includes all hardware and software requirements, but really, it's about communication and connectivity. That is why having high speed internet access is so very important to faculty, staff, & students.

If you do a simple search on Google, you'll find areas with no internet availability not far from our campus in Lemont Furnace. With other areas close by having limited speed (slower) and few providers of the service. Speeds can and do vary greatly in the surrounding area. Students struggle with limited access (using their cell phone for example as a wireless access point) and in some cases having no access at all at home.

Access to the Internet and more specifically Wi-Fi has been labeled a "Common Good" by The Penn State Board of Trustees all the back in 2013. In a nutshell this means, Penn State considers this of high importance and should be provided everywhere and at high speed for all students while on campus. We have over a 100 wireless access point installed and maintained on our campus for this reason.

There can be an academic difference and in many cases an advantage between students with and without high speed Internet connectivity from home. Almost all classes require some sort of Internet access to email, submit homework, view material, & interact with classmates. Penn State has continually pushed for all classroom content to be available online as well as the classes themselves being online. We have had to make arrangement for students to attend online classes here on campus (either hosted from another campus or University Park) as they can't connect and attend from home without Broadband. Students will come in early and/or stay late in one of our computer labs to work on projects and assignments for the same reason.

Penn State Fayette is looking into how we can help to address this issue, giving testimony today to facilitate change is one example of this. We are committed to improving access to high-speed broadband and how that impacts college education as well as K-12.