Union College Bookstore
Unofficial Quick Guide to Computing at Union College

Wireless Access
ITS, the IT department at Union College, has partnered with a company named Apogee to provide high speed internet through the residential network with 24/7 customer support to students on campus. Residents receive 10 Mbps download speed and the ability to connect four additional devices. To use the internet in residence areas, you will need to sign up for an Apogee ResNet account. Connect to MyResNet.com, then choose Create My Account and follow the directions. For more information go to https://its.union.edu/services/networking/resnet.

Printing on Campus
There are black and white printers available in the library for $0.05 per page. Each student is allotted 100 free black and white printing pages an academic year. A color laser printer is also available for student use from any of the public computers located in the Learning Commons on the first floor of the Schaffer Library. It costs $.39 per page to print a color document. The “pay-for-print” system uses the student ID card. Funds may be put on your account using the kiosks located in the Library. While we don’t necessarily think that every student needs their own printer, sharing one with your roommate is a good idea. The Bookstore sells printers and all-in-ones, and we carry the ink for the printers we sell.

Campus Computing
The Wold 24 Hour Computer Lab is located in Peter Irving Wold Center room 118 and is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Please see the ITS website for details. https://its.union.edu/wold-24-hour-computing-lab.

Laptop Recommendations
Neither Union nor any academic or administrative department have any official computing recommendations for students. A list of public computer facilities can be found through the ITS website at http://its.union.edu/electronic-classrooms/public-computing-facilities. Almost any laptop you buy these days is going to have all the features you’ll need to do your schoolwork at Union.

In general, it won’t matter much whether you buy a Mac or PC, students will be able to succeed in either platform. No matter which you choose, Microsoft Office is a must, because it’s the only way to ensure compatibility with all the people you’ll be sharing documents with. We also recommend laptop protection. Some warranties do not cover drops and spills. We recommend protecting your laptop and being familiar with how to mail it in for warranty repairs. Also, a laptop shoved in a backpack with books and being dropped several times a day in the backpack will not last forever. Students are tough on them and no matter how much it costs, it will not last very long with everyday abuse.

It is very important to get used to backing up your data. No warranty prepares for a loss of data. There are numerous cloud based options that are free. We also recommend keyboard covers, screen protectors and laptop covers. If your laptop is also your entertainment center, it makes more sense to buy a smaller laptop with a smaller screen, and hook it up to an external monitor or TV in your room to watch movies, than to buy a laptop with a huge screen to watch movies that you’ll have haul around everywhere.

Engineers have another decision to make: From an engineering standpoint, it may be better to have a PC. That doesn’t mean you can’t use a Mac, but you have to consider the following: At least one of the programs you’ll use in Mechanical Engineering classes is Solidworks, which only runs on Windows. Many engineering firms that you’ll consider after you graduate will be using PCs. None of this is insurmountable if you really want a Mac: You could buy a copy of Windows and install it on your Mac using Boot Camp. You could also just run Solidworks in the Engineering Labs. At least one of the Mechanical Engineering professors would rather have you in the labs anyway, so you can bounce ideas off of other people. We’ve had engineering students very happy with their Macs.

Choose the laptop that is right for you and that you can afford. Make sure you back up your data and that you have a warranty that will help you while you are on campus. Your computer is your responsibility and it will be up to you to find solutions if something happens to it.