Overview of Distance Teaching Options at Montana Tech

**Wimba**

**Synchronous Virtual Classroom** – Instructors can teach online students in a virtual classroom in real time or they can teach a face-to-face class with online students “sitting in” on the live class. A student monitor can help with the online students “sitting in” on a live class. Each professor at Tech has the capability of creating his/her own virtual classroom because Wimba is integrated in Moodle. The applications include a whiteboard, tracking, polling, web surfing, and application sharing. Audio and video capabilities are both available. A good headset with a microphone is recommended.

Directions for creating your own virtual classroom are located at [http://www.mtech.edu/cts/moodle/instructor/wimba.htm](http://www.mtech.edu/cts/moodle/instructor/wimba.htm)

**Asynchronous Environment** - Lectures can be archived either ahead of time or at the same time you are lecturing to a face-to-face class. These lectures are available for students to access and listen to anytime through Moodle, or the files are available in MP3 and MP4 formats which students can download to their portable devices and listen to as many times as they want. Since Wimba is integrated with Moodle the users are authenticated through that system.

**Guest Speakers** can be brought in through Wimba to present to your class without the guest having to travel at all. The presentation can be archived for future reference.

**Online Office Hours** can be conducted using Wimba Classroom. Tutoring and mentoring can be part of the online office hours’ experience. External devices such as PC tablets, Bamboo tablets, or SMART Podiums can be used to heighten the functionality of the whiteboard.

**Need to Travel** – use Wimba to cover your courses while you travel, but be sure to prepare your students ahead of time.

**Meetings** – set up meetings with colleagues across campus, across town, or across the country without having to travel.

**Requirements for Wimba:** Internet and browser, pop-up blockers disabled, Java installed, and headset with microphone especially if running Vista or Windows 7, or web cam if video is desired. One computer can be connected to a projector to project Wimba to a whole classroom so not all students need their own computer to view Wimba.

**Polycom or Tandberg**

High end video conferencing can be accomplished with either our Polycom or Tandberg units. Tech has acquired two portable Tandberg units available for use. We also have a high end video conferencing room in NRB 226. Live courses and/or guest speakers can be broadcast to distance sites with similar technology. Audio and video are available.
Requirements for Polycom or Tandberg: The receiving end must have the same equipment on their end. As with all technology, testing is advised ahead of time. If multiple sites are involved, a bridge might be needed such as the SummitNet Video Bridge which has a charge. There is no archiving feature available for Polycom or Tandberg at the present time.

SMART Podiums – Montana Tech has purchased several SMART Podiums. These are similar to SMART boards, but they look like a computer monitor. Recording is simple and the SMART Notebook allows you to write notes, math problems, etc. that can be captured as recordings with audio, PDF files, or SMART Notebook files. The Podiums work with various software packages.

Any questions or assistance with distance learning contact:

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