

DIGITALLY CONNECTED CAMPUS

Bradley University is leveraging T-Mobile's 5G Advanced Network Solutions (ANS) and Apple's considerable higher education experience and resources to create a student-centric Digitally Connected Campus. The purpose of this partnership is to improve digital equity for students, advance student success, enrich the learning environment, create an ecosystem supportive of academic innovation, and improve the university's infrastructure and operations.

- As the nation's first digital equity campus powered by T-Mobile's 5G Advanced Network Solutions, Bradley has an opportunity to become a true exemplar in higher education and an appealing destination of choice for today's students seeking a distinctive and supportive college experience. This initiative will meet the expectations of a generation of students who seek a digitally enhanced learning experience. Many of these students are graduating from high schools where they have learned on iPads and participated in K-12 digital equity programs.
- This is a six-year partnership, which includes a staged rollout during the 2023-2024 academic year and a full launch in fall 2024. The first recipients of the devices in fall 2023 will be all full-time faculty, select student-facing staff, all first-year students, and students participating in discovery cohorts established by college deans or selected through a CTCL mini-grant process.
- Students, full-time faculty, and many student-facing staff will receive a 10th generation iPad provided by T-Mobile and owned by Bradley University. The 5G-enabled device will come with a 10.9" screen, a Bradley-branded protective case with integrated smart keyboard and trackpad, and an unlimited T-Mobile data plan with 10GB per month of hotspot data at 5G speeds.
- T-Mobile is providing significant investments in Bradley's network infrastructure, including signal amplifiers in six academic buildings, and additional services to make this initiative possible. Not only will the 5G-enabled iPads connect to the hybrid 5G network on Bradley's campus, they will connect to any public 5G or 4G LTE network offered by T-Mobile. Presently, T-Mobile's 5G network covers 325 million people across 1.9 million square miles, which is more than AT&T and Verizon combined.
- Bradley will enable each iPad with education and creativity apps and draw upon Apple's deep expertise in higher education to offer training sessions and set best practices to generate truly impactful outcomes across campus. Additionally, each iPad provided through this initiative will come with four-year coverage in case of accidental damage, including 24/7 phone and web-based support for hardware, iOS, Apple software, and Apple apps. Each user is allowed to install and use personal apps on the university-provided iPad.
- Nationwide, the digital divide in higher education creates significant disadvantages for the more than half of college students who experience stress from unreliable internet or device problems. This new initiative will help bridge that gap and improve Bradley's capacity to provide an equitable educational experience. The Digitally Connected Campus initiative aligns with the student-centric vision of Bradley University's strategic plan. It advances digital access and equity and, therefore, connects to the institution's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion imperative and strategic action item.



- During the first year of the initiative, Bradley will begin work on a “one-stop-shop” experience for the devices for students to connect with their instructors and classes, academic and co-curricular experiences, university services, and the campus. The partnership offers a platform that extends possibilities to connect students and offer data to help with early intervention.
- T-Mobile sees Bradley as a perfect fit in its efforts to identify a college campus that can best prove how its 5G connectivity solutions can digitally transform the student experience in higher education nationwide. In this sense, Bradley has the potential to become a true exemplar.
- Bradley’s Midwest location and medium size were among the reasons why T-Mobile selected Bradley. Given Bradley is essentially a scalable “city within a city,” it provides an appealing environment for developing and testing a broad range of 5G uses cases. Those cases can be tied to higher education or have broader applicability given Bradley’s operations encompass housing, food, security, information technology, and work with community partners. Additionally, T-Mobile was drawn to Bradley’s commitment to a student-centric strategy, academic innovation, and tracking outcomes associated with the initiative. It was also helpful that T-Mobile’s 5G tower for this section of Peoria is located on Geisert Hall.
- 5G was built for high speed, reliability, and low latency. All those who use this 5G network through their Connected Campus iPad will experience significantly improved connectivity and communications. With speeds 10 times faster than 4G, faculty and staff are encouraged to explore and consider the benefits of incorporating the iPad and the 5G capabilities into their programs, courses, and experiences within and beyond the classroom. The possibilities are unlimited. Faculty can leverage this enhanced connectivity to engage students in immersive experiences through augmented reality, facilitate real-time data collection, empower the use of emerging technologies (e.g., IoT and artificial intelligence), and foster an environment that cultivates interdisciplinary projects, community partnerships, and the workforce of tomorrow.
- The iPads are not intended to replace desktops, laptops, and other device needs on campus. The faculty laptop initiative will continue. Students in certain academic programs will continue to use PCs. The Digitally Connected Campus initiative is meant to foster a true sense of belonging for every student by providing the same means and level of access to the Bradley community.
- The iPads and the 5G network will supplement Bradley’s network ecosystem. The iPads will reduce the amount of data being transmitted across the campus Wi-Fi system, including student video streaming and virtual meetings being performed on the iPads’ 5G connection. This will have a positive impact on the Wi-Fi’s connectivity and speed by making more of Bradley’s network bandwidth available to employees and students connecting their computers to Bradley’s Wi-Fi. In-class access to the learning management system through iPads on the 5G network will reduce some collective reliance on the Wi-Fi network while students are in class. This initiative will likely reduce the costs associated with Wi-Fi upgrades. However, it will not replace planned upgrades.
- For additional information and future updates, visit the Digitally Connected Campus page at: <https://bradley.edu/digitallyconnectedcampus/> and or contact a member of the Digitally Connected Campus Rollout Committee. The members are listed at the link provided.