

https://www.themesatribune.com/community/ipad-loaner-program-helps-mcc-students/article_06719432-5414-11ee-bcb8-77ec89f5d45c.html

iPad loaner program helps MCC students

By Dawn Zimmer, Tribune Guest Writer

Sep 22, 2023



MCC President Dr. Tammy Robinson is flanked by Mesa twin sisters Brianna Bailey, left, and Mikhala Bailey during an iPad distribution event. Brianna is a former student and Mikhala is a current one. *(Courtesy of MCC)*

Mesa Community College increased student success with the launch of the iBelong Student Success Initiative, a common platform for teaching and learning using an iPad Bundle consisting of an iPad, keyboard and Apple Pencil.

The initiative is proving to be extremely beneficial for students and faculty and demonstrating a cost-savings for the college, according to Alvin Bridges, MCC associate vice president in college technology services.

“In just over two years the iBelong Student Success Initiative has gained the support of more than 100 faculty members and the tools are being used by more than 2,000 students with a demonstrated need to support their education,” he explained.

The program helps students access course materials, tools and resources, save money on technology and improve the way they engage in their courses.

It also efficiently delivers high impact experiences both in and out of the classroom with equity for all MCC students.

Of the students participating in iBelong, 79% ranked the bundle an eight or higher, on a scale of 1-10, when asked if they believe the iPad contributed to their learning.

“This single piece of technology has helped change a lifelong academic struggler into an aspiring straight-A student,” noted one iBelong student participant.

Most students use the iPads for homework, projects and assignments, taking notes and recordings, accessing lectures or recorded lectures and research.

Said one student benefiting from the initiative, “It’s amazing how a college has made it possible for me to have access to a high quality tablet at no additional cost. I am very impressed with how far MCC has come in this regard. I do not have a computer at the moment and it was extremely important to have the tablet to use.”

Patricia Herrera, MCC instructional technologist, said, “Each iPad used in the initiative was preloaded with a standard set of applications, links to iPad tutorials, shortcuts to important college webpages and the RISE app – developed by students for students to help locate nearby basic needs resources.”

Beth Alsen, MCC Education Studies faculty, helps “to transform how they (students) take notes and share information.

“It is phenomenal to see students taking ownership of their learning; that transcends teaching and learning for me,” she added.

Prior to the pandemic MCC provided laptops to students needing a device for course work.

Preparing the devices for student use off the campus network took hours and the devices needed to be returned every 90 days for required manual relicensing.

By switching to iPads, devices could be prepared and personalized for a student’s individual needs in a matter of minutes and updated remotely.

“The rolling out of the iBelong initiative was much less cumbersome, resulting in an overall cost savings for the college,” added Bridges. “Our plan is to continue expanding to support other programs. We will start with Exercise Science and Bachelor of Art in Early Childhood Education-Dual Language.”