What is Digital Divide?

- It is an economic inequality between groups in terms of **access**, **use**, and **knowledge** of information and communication technologies (Wikipedia)

**Computer Ownership/Access**

What percentage of students own computers? (data taken from 2004 Educause Core Data Survey)

- Median for computer ownership by students in all colleges was reported at %80
- Statistical average was %67 (indicating the difference among institutions)
- Private colleges and universities computer ownership averaged at %81
- Public institutions computer ownership averaged at %59
- Private doctoral institutions averaged at %91
- Public two year community and junior colleges averaged at %35
- Student computer ownership increased from %51 in 2002 to %67 in 2004 across all institutions
- Student computer ownership at community colleges increased from %12 in 2002 to %34 in 2004

Question......What is the significance of the data shown above??

Question...... What facts can be deduced from the data presented above??

Fact ....Is owning a computer sufficient to assume closing the digital divide gap?

- Computer age/model
- Processor type/capability
- Software availability
- Broadband or dial-up access
- Student residence location
Connectivity

High Speed defined by FCC (Federal Communication Commission) is 4MBPS download and 1 MBPS upload (Pew study in 2012, Wired magazine)

- Percentage of Americans with access to “high speed broadband” has increased from %66 in 2012 to %70 in 2013
- %32 of people without access to “high speed internet” have smart phones
- Blacks and Latinos have smart phones …this brings them equal to whites in terms of access to “broadband”
- %90 of college graduates has access to “high speed internet” at their homes. This is true for households earning more than $75,000
- %37 of those who have not completed high school have access to “high speed internet”. This is true for households earning less than $30,000

Question…..What can be deduced from the data presented above??

Question…..What is the statistical significance to the data presented above??

Question…..What is considered high speed broadband? DSL, Satellite, mobile wireless

Fact….. Mobile wireless technology is not a substitute for wired technology

Fact…..Relying on smart phones alone for access is among the minority groups

Fact…High speed internet access should be defined at 100 MBPS download and upload

Fact …..Statistical studies demonstrate that digital divide is persistent with close correlations between socioeconomic status and home internet access

Knowledge/technology use

- Access and ownership alone don’t guarantee information/technology literacy
- Students need information literacy with respect to content and discipline

Who is at risk?

- Low socioeconomic population
- Minorities
- Elderly
- Rural population

What strategic questions should college leaders consider to overcome digital divide?

- Do we know whether students own computers?
- Do we know whether students have appropriate knowledge level?
• Does the student demographic influence their level of access and knowledge of computers?
• Does digital/information literacy differ across disciplines?
• Do we know the appropriate threshold for digital access and use on campus?

Can digital divide be overcome? How?

At college level

• Develop an Assessment tool for all incoming student to assess information/computer literacy
• Provide computer literacy education to at risk students of all levels
• Allow sufficient access to computer labs with appropriate software/hardware
• Assess adequate level of information/computer literacy upon graduation
• Collaboration with high schools in offering computer literacy after school programs
• Seek external funding to support offering computer literacy workshops to at risk population
• Offer information literacy at community centers representing at risk population

At community level

• Public computing labs...Access
• Robust connectivity and access to broadband....Connectivity
• Technology/information literacy....Literacy
• Recycle computers to at risk population...Access
• Can you think of others???