Minimum laptop specifications for students entering in Fall 2015 and beyond:

**Operating System:**
Mac: 10.9 (Mavericks), 10.10 (Yosemite)
Windows: Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 8.1
**Unsupported:** Chrome OS, Linux, Windows 8 RT, iOS, and Android.

**Processor:** Core i5 1.7GHz dual-core or better

**RAM:** 4GB or greater

**Hard Drive:** 250GB HDD/SSD or greater

**Display Resolution:** 1440x900 or greater

**Display Size:** 12.5” diagonal or greater

**Warranty:** 2 year or greater warranty highly recommended

You can purchase a computer that meets these specifications from any vendor. The University of Illinois Tech Zone (http://union.illinois.edu/shop/techzone) staff are familiar with the GSLIS laptop requirements and can assist you in choosing a laptop that will best suit your needs.

Purchase a laptop that you will feel comfortable with, not just now but during your entire time at GSLIS and potentially beyond. Think of this purchase as an investment not only for your education but also for your professional career.

When GSLIS purchases laptops for faculty, staff, and student workers, we choose laptops that exceed the minimum specifications, such as a Macbook Pro with 8GB RAM or a Lenovo Thinkpad X1 Carbon with a core i7 processor, SSD hard drive, and 8GB RAM. They are business class models and therefore built sturdier than consumer laptops, usually lasting a year or two longer. More memory and a faster processor helps address the needs of GSLIS users, allowing them to have multiple programs open simultaneously and run more intensive applications (such as ArcGIS and statistical analysis software) without significant slowdown.
Recommended improvements over minimum specifications:

2. More RAM (6 or 8GB or more).
3. A faster processor.
4. A larger hard drive (500GB or more)

What do these improvements do for me?

Q: Why a business-class laptop?

A business-class laptop is generally built with a sturdier, better designed body. This makes it easier to upgrade components, such as if you want to add more RAM in the future. Because of the design improvements, they will also generally last longer before parts break.

Q: How do I know if a laptop is business-class or consumer-class?

Different manufacturers’ websites categorize their laptops with labels such as “Business vs. Consumer” or “Work vs. Home.”

Q: Why more RAM?

When working with many programs at once or on large projects, speed will be limited by RAM available. Web browsers, streaming media services, social networking tools, and office applications each take some RAM. If the system runs low on RAM, running these at the same time can degrade performance significantly.

Q: Why get a faster processor?

Processors in today’s computers are generally fast enough for most uses, but there are some areas of study for which having more processing power would be highly beneficial. Data analytics, community informatics, and digital library classes are examples.

Q: Why get a larger hard drive?

More disk space could be needed if you store large photo libraries, video files, run multiple operating systems, or if you will be using your laptop for large dataset analysis.

Q: I have a question about laptop specifications that isn’t covered here!

More information is available in the GSLIS Laptop Requirement FAQ (http://webdocs.lis.illinois.edu/tech/2015-laptop-faq.pdf). Feel free to contact the GSLIS Help Desk (help@support.lis.illinois.edu) if you have further questions.

**DRAFT**