Is there Support for Linux Computers?

Understanding Linux

The first thing anyone supporting Linux should ask is "what distribution are you using?" There are hundreds of different kinds of Linux, as described in the Wikipedia article at this link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Linux_distributions
Each one has different library versions, different packaging tools, and different ways they get at the internals for the user, from the command line to unique GUI widgets. There is some commonality across distributions based on the same core, but there are now a lot of different cores.

Technical Support Challenges

Information Technology Services (ITS) is not able to write documentation for all the various Linux distributions due equipment and resource limitations. It requires a major investment in time and staff resources. In addition, for an enterprise environment, Linux is not exactly "free," as support contracts would have to be purchased for "expert" technical support for troubleshooting Linux problems.

Maintenance Challenges

Linux is certainly not bug-free as witnessed by some of the past BASH and GNU vulnerabilities. If someone using Linux has questions about it, they MUST be prepared to do the research independently.

In comparison, Microsoft Windows licenses are supported and paid through department and division budgets. To the university staff and faculty, the license to run workstations for staff, faculty, and lab use is at no cost. In addition, there are procedures in place at a campus-wide level to standardize Microsoft patches and security to minimize and eliminate problems with the operating system in a very timely fashion.

What if I still want to use Linux?

If a campus user is going to run Linux, they should understand the ramifications of such a decision and be able to acquire the skills and knowledge for supporting their own Linux distribution(s). All of the information required to connect a Linux computer to the campus WiFi includes:

- Network type (aka security): WPA2-Enterprise (sometimes referred to as 802.1x)
- Authentication mode: EAP-PEAP
- Inner authentication type: MSCHAPv2
- CA Certificate in use can be found here: https://www.incommon.org/cert/repository/AddTrustExternalCARoot.txt
- Identity: 9-digit campus ID
- Password: BeachID password

How this information is translated into Linux cannot be determined by ITS because distributions vary so widely, and specific hardware is not available to make this determination.