NM STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Engineering
Office of the Dean
MSC 3449
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
575-646-7234, fax: 575-646-3549

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 27, 2013

TO: Engineers' Council

FROM: Ricardo B. Jacquez, Dean

SUBJ: Proposed College of Engineering Technology Fee

Background

The College of Engineering (CoEngr) requests your assistance in soliciting feedback as well as support for a proposed technology fee that will allow us to better serve your academic needs. The CoEngr have been proactive and somewhat successful with requests to the administration for funds to cover specific items required to improve the technology infrastructure in the College, including large-scale laboratory equipment upgrades, computer software and hardware, network infrastructure, and web services. However, these "one-time only" funds are not sufficient to keep up with changing technology and our recurring needs of updated technological infrastructure. One-time solutions are not sustainable due to the unique and highly specialized needs of ABET accredited engineering programs. Under current economic times, funding of higher education has not been able to provide adequate financial support to keep up with the need for technology growth in the disciplines of engineering. We have operated on a "do with what you have" basis for a long time. This approach to your education is not appropriate for a world-class engineering program like we provide at New Mexico State University. You deserve better.

At NMSU, as well as on a national level, engineering education is more expensive to deliver than education in most other disciplines. Engineering education requires the development and maintenance of modern laboratories and current technology. This requirement results in more square feet of facility per student, higher annual capital expenditures per student for equipment, and more support personnel in the labs. Under the proposed fee structure students enrolled within the CoEngr would be charged a program-wide fee with the primary goals of:

- Helping ensure that College programs maintain quality instructional laboratories, an up to date technical infrastructure within the College, and the ability to an intensive program assessment (required for ABET accreditation),
- Helping meet the higher cost of engineering education by augmenting existing state funds which have diminished due to budget cuts and inflation,
- Helping to support and increase student access to advanced technology within each of the CoEngr programs, and
- Greatly increase the College's ability to leverage private support for our programs (i.e., leveraging matching funds).

Technology Fee Structure

We have worked on several versions of the fee structure and at this point it has been optimized to provide the most constructive impact on your education from a learning standpoint, while at the same time considering the financial burden on you as a student; thereby, minimizing the financial burden. The yearly cost we have identified to provide the necessary services, systems, and consumables is summarized below.

Categories of Annual Expenses Included in the Tech Fee Budget

Laboratory and Capstone Supplies and Materials	$ 86,000
Software, IT infrastructure, and classroom technology	25,000
Data Acquisition System	5,600
IT Infrastructure (computers, printers, servers)	145,600
Staffing (loaded with fringe benefits)	
Students and GA for IT Support	77,000
Lab Technicians (2.4 FTE)	202,550
IT and Web Technician/Support (1.2 FTE)	113,520
Safety Specialist	66,000
Grand Total	**$721,711**

Student Enrollment (declared majors, undergraduate and graduate) = 2,500.
Tech Fee (per student, per semester) = $145.

Please realize that the costs outlined above are a relatively fixed cost and must be collected annually to keep up with the actual cost of the technology. Therefore, the structure by which the fee is collected (per student per semester, per engineering credit hour taken, a lower division vs upper division classification) does not affect the total cost per graduate of the College. Over the course of your education the total amount of fee collected will be the same regardless of the fee structure. I've selected the per student per semester structure because the College is directly serving students with technology support from day one, primarily IT and class/lab instruction. This structure also spreads out the cost over the course of your education rather than concentrate the cost during the final 4-6 semesters.

Accountability

All aspects of the fee implementation will be designed to be fully accountable to students, faculty, and University administrators.

The CoEngr web site will contain a link to a page that documents projected budget items and expenditures that will be updated and summarized on an annual basis. Any interested party will able to examine this budget and provide comments to the College administration at any time. We will also establish a practice of presenting the budget and expenditures to E-Council and the Dean's Advisory Council on an annual basis for the purpose of transparency in collection and use of the funds generated by the technology fee.

Request

I request your support to solicit input and feedback from E-Council and your departmental student organizations on this proposal to establish a tech fee. I also request that you explicitly inform me if you support the tech fee, or not. If you support the fee, the proposal to establish the fee must be submitted to the University Budget Committee on October 7. Therefore, I request that you provide your written feedback to me by October 4. I encourage you to meet with your department heads to review this request so that you may obtain a sense and perspective for the specific needs in your department.

Your willingness to engage this discussion and provide feedback on this proposal is greatly appreciated. I appreciate you support. Thank you.