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## Request for Further Information Regarding the Student Technology Fee

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# Request for Further Information Regarding the Student Technology Fee

Submitted by Michael Moore

10/10/2005

## Question:

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What university policies govern the collection and distribution of the Student Technology fee monies? Where on the website are these policies available for review? What is the current membership of the Student Technology Fee Committee? How are members chosen and how long are the terms? Currently, the College of Education has no representation on the Student Technology Fee Committee. Why aren't all colleges represented by both a student and a faculty member?

Does the Student Technology Fee Committee have a website and, if so, what is the URL?

Why can't all colleges receive a fixed amount (e.g., 30%) of the collected student fee proportionate to the number of students in each college? Such money would be awarded through each college's technology committee, which would have student representation.

## Rationale: .

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We appreciate the reply to our first request for information. The COE this past spring generated \$100,928 in technology fee and was awarded \$0.00. The COE submitted proposals totaling \$58699. Criteria for awarding the money "include heavy weighting on the number of students affected and availability" according to your previous response to our first request. We had no representation on the Committee to help make our case.

Since the Student Technology Fee Committee first dispersed funds through competition in 2003, the COE has generated \$856,463 in fees. We have received a total of \$9593 in money from the Committee (.0112%). According to the Committee's records, we have

requested or applied for \$124,615 in funds (we suspect that this figure is incorrect as the Committee's data revealed that we did not request funds FY Fall 2004; however, we have copies of proposals that were submitted.) Based on the Committee's data money received to money applied for is .07%.

The COE by far has received less money than any other college and less than most individual departments. For example, Biology has received \$64, 849. COBA has received \$242,247. Writing and Linguistics has received \$75,608, and CHHS has received \$195,005. The biggest winner by far is IT Services with awards totaling \$1,026,541. Although we don't begrudge any unit's awards since all awards go to help our students, we do want to point out the disparity of the current system.

We feel that the current method of dispersing technology fee funds is not equitable in light of the fees generated and a more equitable method should be developed.

### **Senate Response:**

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One request was from Michael Moore who asked further about the technology fees, "Were policies and procedures posted? What was the composition of the committee? And could colleges receive a fixed or proportional amount based on numbers of majors?" There is a web page containing the guidelines and procedures, which is under the Provost's Student web page. It lists both their guiding principles and their formal procedures, as well as has the actual form for putting in a request. The committee itself is comprised of six students: the SGA president; the Vice President for Academic Affairs; and 4 other students named by the SGA President. They represent a number of different majors. There are also six administrators and faculty on the committee. Additional information on priorities for allocation was given by Dr. Bleicken. In addition to the key criteria of the number of students served and the learning outcomes achieved, this year's requests will also be categorized according to the following:

1. Replacing failed technology equipment;
2. Required maintenance. (For example, having a supply of bulbs on hand; Bulbs for some of these projectors are very expensive. Lab supplies are expensive as well);
3. Upgrades, particularly to address curricular requirements; and
4. Purchasing new technology.

A list of everything requested and everything funded for the past three fiscal years was provided to the Senate in a spreadsheet.

Minutes: 10/2005: From Pat Humphrey: To try to answer some of the questions about the Technology fee: policies/procedures are stated on the web under the provost's webpage at

[http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/provost/students/techfee\\_guidelines.html](http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/provost/students/techfee_guidelines.html). From there, you can also click on the committee procedures and the form used to request funds. The current membership is explained below. Terms are for one year (July 1 to June 30). Most of the members are "chosen" because of their position; the only ones which are "appointed" are at-large students appointed by the SGA president.

Dr. Linda Bleicken's response to the questions about representation from all colleges and each college receiving some proportional amount are below.

Here are some thoughts on Mike's most recent questions regarding the Technology Fee.

1. The Student Technology Fee is designed to fund priorities from across the campus. Therefore, it is most effectively used when the priorities of the entire university are considered and prioritized. Needs of individual colleges vary from year to year. Often a significant need in a college (for example, a student lab) is satisfied in one year, and that expenditure is not required again by the college for another four to five years until the lab machines require replacement. Please recall that two key criteria for the disbursement of technology fee dollars are the number of students being served and the learning outcomes achieved by the use of technology. This year the technology fee proposal form has been updated to more clearly identify these key factors so that fee requests can be more effectively prioritized. In addition, the requests will also be categorized this year according to the following criteria:

1) Technology failure. An example might be the failure of a projector in a smart classroom.

2) Maintenance required. For example, lab supplies are funded in large student labs, such as those in the Library, that serve students from across campus.

3) Upgrade requested. For example, upgraded software or hardware is needed, particularly to address curricular requirements.

4) New technology requested.

It is hoped that this additional information will help to more effectively prioritize requests so that both university needs as well as individual college needs can be addressed.

2. Because this committee reviews technology from a campus-wide perspective, staff members assigned to the committee are typically those with a broad, university perspective. As you know these include the Dean of the Library, the CIO, a representative of Auxiliary Services (who helps to represent the interests of students in University Housing), the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Provost. In recent years, we have included a faculty representative who has technical expertise. The individual currently serving in this role is Dr. Susan Williams, Chair of Information Systems.

Because this fee is one that is assessed of students and is designed to serve student needs, there is an equal number of students who serve on the committee. The students represent a significant voice in the decision-making and represent a cross-section of the colleges. Majors of the students on the committee this year include psychology, accounting, information technology, chemistry, finance, sport management, and speech communications. It is believed that these students provide the cross-campus overview that leads to balanced decision-making.

I hope this helps to address these questions. If you need additional clarification, please let me know.

Thanks, Linda

Michael Moore (COE): I wanted to make a comment, if I might, on the technology fees, and I appreciate the information that we did receive in response to my request. I brought this up on behalf of a number of faculty members from the College of Education, and I don't know that the response we have received really gets at a couple of the issues that prompted the request.

1) Faculty representation. Pat Humphrey (COST; Senate Moderator) said that there is a faculty member on that committee. Well, there is a department chair on that committee, and the rest of the committee is made up of administrators. There are six students, and these are there by Board of Regents' mandate from 2003. None of those students represent the College of Education, and none of the others on the committee represent the College of Education. Furthermore, some figures that we generated show that the College of Education has generated \$856,000 in fees, student fees, from its students. We have requested \$124,000 in terms of the proposals for funds. We have received

\$9,500 over the three years of the funding cycles that are two per year, and I think the awards are going to be announced tomorrow for the 2006 fiscal year. And our concern is that we wonder if this structure is still serving the University as well as it might. And one of the items that we asked about was whether or not there should be a fixed amount that goes to every college from the fees that their students generate. And this is something that that we hope the committee would consider, especially for us in the College of Education, where we have received so little funds. We feel that if we receive say 20 or 30% of the funds our students generated that we would be able to assess our needs to our own technology committee, and apply those funds where we feel they are needed. A number of departments have received (smaller departments than the whole College of Education) quite a bit of money. Biology, for instance, has received \$64,000. Writing and Linguistics has received \$75,000. COBA has received \$242,000. IT Services has received over a million dollars. Our college has only received \$9,500. I think that our request for information really wanted to see if the committee could possibly address these concerns further down the line.

Linda Bleicken (Provost): I will respond briefly. There has been an awful lot of information already shared with the Senate on this. If you will recall, some criteria that are used to distribute these funds, and remember there are six students that sit on this committee all the time, and that student representation varies from year to year, so I dare say that at some point we have had a representative from the College of Education. Sometimes we simply do not have someone on the Senate perhaps who is chosen for that specific role. One of the major criteria for funding is the number of students served. When you see a large amount of money like the amount that was given to the College of Business Administration for funding computer labs, it was awarded based on student accessibility. There are three large computer labs in the College of Business that are open very late and that are staffed with lab assistants. Students from anywhere on the campus can access not only the Library, which is open many hours, but also the College of Business. The labs are not restricted to only College of Business students. The students on the committee find two criteria to be very powerful in considering proposals: What is the accessibility, and how many students are served? The proposals are extensive. They go out to the committee, which has sufficient amount of time to review them. We sit down as a committee and make the determination. One of the reasons that there are as many administrators, I suppose, on the committee is simply that they provide a slightly more global perspective. Some of these administrators who are on the committees are maybe quasi administrators. For example, a representative from Auxiliary Services who also represents the University Housing interest. There are many labs that we have now in our housing units, and so that is very good representation for student interests.

Lisa Spence, CIO, sits on the committee. She also provides a global perspective. If there is a question about the amount of money that is devoted on this committee to IT Services, once again, remember that is a global sort of expense. That goes to serve the whole campus and the students who are here on the whole campus.

So those are just some thoughts that I have in responding. You know, certainly the committee has not yet met this year. We meet twice a year. We meet in the fall to make the initial allocations, and that is the largest amount of money that is allocated during the year. We meet again in the spring to allocate any monies that are remaining, and then any monies that are sitting there also go during the rest of the summer to address needs that inevitably come up. Some of you may remember a few years ago, I think it was two years ago, we had the exploding projector bulbs in some of our smart classrooms, and so there was a need to replace those for life safety issues. Those are some ways that these dollars are used, and we really try to take a look at how do we serve student need with this fee. Thank you.

Laurie Markle (SGA): In reference to College of Education representation on the Student Technology Committee, I received information from our President Shri Davis yesterday that there will be a College of Education Senator there to take my place tomorrow. I am not going to be able to attend the meeting tomorrow because I will be giving a presentation in Dr. Graham's class. The College of Education Senator will be there because there has been information shared about the College of Education concerns about lack of representation.

Marc Cyr (CLASS): If we are talking global representation, then I think we need to have the part of the globe that is made up by colleges and by the faculty also represented. One can have such a large view that one loses sight of what is going on in the trenches. I think that very often faculty members in departments and colleges are a little closer to the needs of their colleges, and I think that a little better representation of faculty from various colleges might help somewhat in the distribution of the funds.

Candy Schille (CLASS): As I understand it, this is a University committee, not a Senate committee in any way? [Someone replied: Correct.] Candy then continued by saying that the only thing that we can do is sort of suggest, hope, pray, etc., etc.?

Pat Humphrey ((COST) and Senate Moderator): That would be my impression.

Candy Schille (CLASS): You know, it really looks to me like Linda's answers were pretty good, but it still looks to me like Michael's remarks are very compelling. Insofar as what

this body can do, it does not look like much. Linda talked about the two meetings that the committee is going to have, and it sounds like they are going to have a really full agenda on those days. So if the committee was willing to, perhaps they might take another look at their organization, their priorities, and at what seems like a pretty convincing inequity in numbers. Maybe they need to have a third meeting--just a suggestion.

Linda Bleicken (Provost): Point taken.