

PROPOSAL FOR TECHNOLOGY FEE WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications proposes the establishment of a technology fee of \$12 per student credit hour in journalism. This fee would begin Fall 2004.

Students and faculty of the School support this proposal, which is based on the following rationale and research.

To date, the School has underwritten much of the cost of new technology. In FY 2003, the School spent more than \$60,000 on technology (beyond SCH tech fees allocated to the School), as well as more than \$25,000 on student assistants to work in labs. In addition, the School eliminated a \$35,000 technology assistant position in FY 2002 in a cost-cutting measure. It desperately needs to find a way to increase support for technology and tech staffing.

As a result of curriculum revision, all students now use cameras and spend considerable time working and creating work online. To meet these needs, the School has taken money from unfilled faculty lines to cover the increasing costs of technology. While this was necessary to move students and faculty towards media convergence, using funds this way greatly inhibits the School's instructional capability.

To consider the feasibility of a technology fee, Dean Gentry formed a committee including graduate students and undergraduates in both of the School's tracks along with faculty and staff. (Please see supporting materials for membership.) At its initial meeting, the committee developed a plan for gathering information, discussing needs with a wide variety of J-School students and developing this recommendation.

The Journalism Technology Fee Committee first determined whether other journalism programs at Big 12 universities had technology fees:

- Baylor has a technology fee of \$150 per semester assessed by the University.
- K-State does not have a school technology fee, but students will be required to have their own computers beginning Fall 2005.
- Oklahoma State has a university fee of \$5 per credit hour, \$3 of which goes to the College of Arts and Sciences.
- Texas Tech charges a \$15 course fee for all courses for purchase of classroom technology.
- The University of Oklahoma charges \$25 per credit hour for all journalism courses.
- The University of Colorado has a Student Computing Fee of \$65.60 per student per semester. The School of Journalism does not have a technology fee per se but a course fee of \$17 per student per course provides equipment and materials used in the classroom.
- The committee had no response from Texas, Iowa State, Missouri, Nebraska and Texas A&M.

The committee conducted five focus groups during a three-day period, moderated by the committee's student members. In addition to learning what students' needs were, the moderators probed students' attitudes toward a technology fee in general. The committee learned that students were aware that other KU academic units were already considering such fees or had already instituted a technology fee. They thought that the J-School should have one, too. The students considered credit-hour fees from \$10 to \$15 per hour and expressed a strong preference for \$12.

The committee members collaborated to develop a 20-item questionnaire that students could complete online. In an email to all journalism students, as well as in-class

announcements and hall posters, the committee encouraged broad participation by undergraduate and graduate students in the School and pre-journalism students (freshmen and sophomores) planning to enter the School. The survey produced 212 responses, of which half included specific suggestions for improvements that students would like to see the School implement.

The committee's student members presented the research results to approximately 500 pre-journalism students in J101, the School's largest class. The presenters emphasized the importance of the fee proposal to these Pre-J students because these were the students who would be paying a fee the longest, as well as deriving the benefits. Only one J101 student asked a question: "How much is the fee?" (This presentation and the Q&A were videotaped.)

The committee's student members contacted the presidents of the J-School's professional organizations for input and support. These organizations include PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America), the KU Ad Club, the Art & Copy Club, the Pre-Journalism Club and JAMS (Journalism and Minority Students). In addition, students working on the *Kansan* were contacted about this proposal. Some *Kansan* staff participated in the focus group discussions and served on the committee. Each group supports the proposal. Letters are attached.

The results of the committee's research and discussions with the student stakeholder groups within the School can be summarized as follows.

1. Students strongly support a Journalism technology fee to meet current and future needs for tools, training and timely access.
 - a. Tools include hardware (computers, printers, scanners, cameras), software and networking. These must be kept current on a reasonable cycle of maintenance and upgrades. Students need the assurance that the tools they work with in the J-School will be current with industry uses and expectations.
 - b. Training in the highly specialized software programs used within the media professions. Students want to leave KU feeling confident of their technical literacy. In addition to training for themselves, the students recognize the importance of training lab assistants who are able to provide coaching and technical support in the School's labs.
 - c. Timely access to the School's computers, equipped with necessary software, is especially important not only in evenings and on weekends but also during the 8-to-5 day. Students express the need for more work stations and increased daytime access to computing areas inside the School.
2. Students expect to remain involved in technology planning once the fee is in place and to continue having a voice in how future funds are invested in technology within the School.
 - a. The Journalism Technology Fee Committee has established a strongly collaborative relationship among students, faculty and staff interested in improving the School's technology. The School will continue to have a Technology Committee comprising the same membership, with special effort toward involving students new to the J-School.
 - b. The Technology Committee will continue to conduct regular research to assess students' needs and to seek their involvement in determining priorities within the School.

3. A technology fee of \$12 per student credit hour in journalism will enable the School to meet the needs articulated above.
4. Implementation:
 - a. The fee would take effect in Fall 2004
 - b. The fee would apply to all journalism hours a student takes
 - c. The fee would apply to undergraduates and graduate students
 - d. The fee would be indexed

Supporting Materials:

Technology Fee Committee Membership
Letters from Student Organizations
Survey Instrument
Summary of Research

Technology Fee Proposal Committee

Co-chairs: Professor Bob Basow, Strategic Communication
Professor Sharon Bass, News/Information

Andrea Hughey, student senator
Stephanie LeClair, student senator
Staci Wolfe, graduate student
Matt Kappenman, Strategic Communications (*Kansan* sales)
Andrew Vaupel, News/Info (*Kansan*)
Shane Kucera, News/Info (*Kansan*)

Cade Cruikshank, Staff, IT
Jennifer Kinnard, Staff, Communications
Jimmy Gentry, Dean