Instructional Technology
Course Materials and Service Fee

University of California, Irvine

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Technology plays a critical role in university education, and students benefit greatly from the educational technology currently available on the Irvine campus. This includes the EEE learning management platform, smart classrooms, instructional computing labs, library resources, and wireless networking, among other capabilities. UCI's current environment was created through past incremental campus investments. Technology and student needs are constantly evolving, and require hardware and software refresh on an annual basis.

Funding for technology refresh, and for staff support of technology services, has significantly decreased in recent years due to the budget crisis. Whereas wise past investments and heroic staff efforts have allowed us to continue to provide educational services of reasonable quality and responsiveness, the current lack of funding is now catching up with us and will have an increasing impact. At the same time, we have not been able to invest in new technology to the extent necessary to maximize student educational experience.

The situation has become additionally compromised due to cuts in 2011/12 state funding. This document outlines a new UC Irvine Instructional Technology Course Materials and Services Fee (CMSF) to address the problem. This approach was developed in consultation with representatives of student government and supported by the Student Fee Advisory Committee.

BACKGROUND

Chancellors are delegated authority to assess Course Materials and Services Fees (CMSF) including those in support of Instructional Technology. Three UC campuses and many institutions across the nation have implemented a student technology fee as a way to augment institutional support and to provide a predictable stream of revenue for educational computing. Other UC locations are considering doing so as well.

UCLA has had a technology CMSF for undergraduates in place since 1997. A $6/unit fee (increasing to $8/unit in 2011/12) is assessed against courses in the College of Letters and Sciences (L&S) and a $7/unit fee is assessed for Engineering courses. According to information released in 2006, UCLA's L&S fee raises about $5.5m annually, which funds web-based instructional tools and materials, student computing laboratories, and instructional software development. The Engineering fee covers similar services, as well as server maintenance, printing, software licenses, loaner

laptops, wireless access and student help-desk support. UCLA is raising the L&S fee to provide an additional $1.5m of funding for a comprehensive, campus-wide student learning and collaboration environment.

UCSB implemented a $2.50/unit fee for Letters and Sciences courses effective 2010 to fund their Instructional Technology Enhancement Initiative. The focus of the initiative is "providing online access to instructional materials and tools, computer labs for teaching, collaboration, and projects, classroom technology for presentation and interaction, and online academic advising tools and processes."   They are establishing new computer labs, implementing a learning management system (like UCI's EEE), digitizing course materials, providing faculty training, adding classroom technology, implementing wireless networking, and adding student technology support services.

UC Riverside also implemented a student technology fee of $4 per unit for all undergraduate courses and $2 per unit for all graduate courses as of fall quarter, 2011.

According to UC Davis, the average technology fee is $5/unit within UC, $11/unit at public comparison institutions, and $13/unit at other institutions that they polled.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY FEE ASSESSMENT

Beginning in Winter quarter 2012, UC Irvine will assess an Instructional Technology Course Materials and Services Fee of $4/unit for all undergraduate lecture courses. The fee is a component of the UCI Educational Technology Initiative (eTech@UCI) which is being established to facilitate campus technology outreach and planning. The fee will provide revenue to fund technology that supports student learning and enhances student experience at UCI. It will ensure UCI is able to provide robust services that meet evolving student needs by maintaining current services, providing equipment refresh funding, funding additional support positions, and enabling new initiatives. Key focus areas for technology funding include classroom technology, online instruction facilities and materials, instructional computing labs, and network access.

Implementation:

- The fee will be assessed for all UCI students enrolled in undergraduate classes of type "lecture" at $4 per unit of credit. This includes students attending through EAP reciprocity.
- The fee will be capped at 15 units, limiting the total amount assessed against an individual student in a given quarter to $60.
- The assessment will occur after the third week of classes and will be non-refundable.

Oversight:

- The Educational Technology Initiative Advisory Committee (ETIAC) will provide guidance on how maintenance and equipment refresh money is spent, review technology priorities, and advise on which new initiatives to fund.
- ETIAC will also help interpret results of periodic student surveys and focus groups conducted to track student technology needs and provide metrics on how well they are being met by campus services and initiatives.
- ETIAC membership will include students, faculty, and representatives of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, OIT and Planning and Budget.
- The document "*Guidelines For The Educational Technology Initiative Advisory Committee*" provides additional information.

FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

The total annual revenue collected by the eTech@UCI Fee is expected to be just under $3 million. A portion of these funds will be used to support EEE, computing lab, classroom, and other educational technology services. A detailed spending plan for the remaining funds will be developed annually, allocating across three broad categories described below: hardware and software refresh, new instructional staff support positions, and new initiatives. The exact fund distribution may change from year to year to address evolving priorities and state budget cuts. The annual spending plan will be reviewed by the ETIAC and approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost.

Annual Hardware and Software Refresh

Hardware and software used to provide educational/instructional infrastructure and services must be regularly replaced or upgraded to keep up with evolving needs and technological advances. "Refresh" funds are used to annually replace a fraction of instructional/student equipment and software in each of the areas below:

Classroom technology

UCI has 131 general assignment classrooms that have been renovated over the last eight years as smart classrooms. The equipment in these rooms includes computers, projectors, screens, video decks, controllers, touch-panels, audio systems, and video switchers. Replacement cost for the full UCI classroom equipment inventory totals approximately $1,872,500; replacing one-fifth of this annually would cost $374,500.

Instructional computing labs

OIT operates 450 computers in 12 student computing labs distributed around the campus. UCI schools also provide student labs with an additional 900 computers. These labs are used for in-class instruction in major programs, student homework

assignments, and other student needs. Replacing one-fifth of 1350 computers annually would cost approximately $270,000.

<u>EEE and other central instructional services</u>

EEE and other online instructional technology services require servers and other equipment behind the scenes to function. As user needs and technology sophistication increase, additional capacity is required to maintain responsive and effective service.

New Instructional Technology Staff Positions

We will increase responsiveness and provide additional support for instructional technology by funding new staff positions in support of EEE, classroom technology, instructional computing labs, student help-desk support and training, and in other areas. The types of positions to be funded include the following:

<u>EEE/Online-Learning Developers</u>

These staff help develop and enhance the EEE learning management platform. They use a variety of technology including PHP, MySQL, and JavaScript to make available additional student-focused EEE functionality and address evolving online learning requirements and standards such as Moodle or Sakai. They also facilitate the creation of online materials to enhance learning through "hybrid" online/classroom courses.

<u>Classroom Technicians</u>

These positions provide support to classes, events and student organizations using any of the 131 campus smart classrooms. They staff a classroom help desk, assisting instructors over the phone, in the classrooms, via email, and as office walk-ins. Technicians consult on technology use, provide equipment instruction, troubleshoot and track issues, monitor and perform regular maintenance on equipment, and respond to all varieties of classroom service requests. They unlock lecture hall podiums daily, program equipment to turn on and off based on the room schedules, and program keycards allowing room access.

<u>Instructional Computing Lab Specialists</u>

These staff configure, deploy and operate computing lab equipment and software for use by students. As a part of the OIT instructional computing lab team, they would augment current services by supporting additional labs and improving lab service levels. If funding is allocated, they will develop and maintain a 'virtual computing lab' service for students whereby students can access and operate often expensive and critical topical applications (e.g., Matlab, SAS, SPSS, Mathematica, ArcView) from their remote computers without the need to be physically in a campus instructional computing lab.

<u>Help-desk/training staff</u>

Adding additional help-desk career and student positions would allow the creation of a dedicated help-desk function for students, and would provide additional student technology training. Staff would test, recommend, and document contemporary technologies useful to students, and provide hands-on assistance with configuration of mobile devices (laptops, tablets, phones) used to access campus services.   They would advise on software and configuration for secure computing, maintain currency on operating systems relevant to student computing, test new releases for interoperability with OIT services for students, and provide additional student consultation and training.

New Initiatives

A portion of the annual revenue generated by the eTech@UCI fee will be available to fund new initiatives; the precise amount will vary somewhat each year. Each approved initiative will receive one-time funding but will also require staff time for implementation and ongoing support. Permanent positions funded by the fee will be the primary source of this staff support.

OIT will assemble initiatives for consideration based on needs identified through interactions with the instructional community, and through a call for proposals. Proposals will be analyzed to determine costs and implications for implementation and then presented to the Educational Technology Initiative Advisory Committee for review and input on prioritization.

Initiatives to be considered are those that would enhance student experience at UCI through technology, with a primary focus on education and learning. Examples of potential initiative areas include:

a. Expand wireless coverage in student areas, provide additional bandwidth and capacity in high-traffic areas such as the Student Center
b. Provide additional support for student laptops in key campus locations such as the Student Center and Libraries and create informal technology-equipped learning spaces for student-faculty interaction and group study outside of classrooms
c. Create a "virtual computing lab" to provide 24 hour student access to specialized licensed software from student laptops and home computers
d. Implement course-casting, white-board capture, and other missing classroom capabilities
e. Provide mobile access to EEE and other student tools
f. Create flexible classroom spaces with collaborative workspaces and appropriate technology in support of innovative instructional practices and student interaction
g. Provide software systems that enhance academic advising and allow instructors and counselors to track student progress, detect problems, and reach out to provide assistance
h. Increase availability/access to Library course reserves and other Library materials
i. Provide additional student productivity tools through the Student Portal
j. Establish one or more rooms equipped with computers that allow online exams and tests in a proctored setting

ANNUAL SPENDING PLAN

Each year OIT will assemble a "spending plan" itemizing how that year's eTech@UCI fee funds are to be utilized. eTech@UCI fee funds will cover existing commitments, including staff positions approved in previous years, base equipment refresh budgets, and multi-year initiatives. Increases in salary and benefit costs will be covered as well. The remaining funds will be available for funding new initiatives or additional refresh needs beyond recurring base budgets.

In the fall of each year, the Educational Technology Initiative Advisory Committee will review a draft spending plan, and their input will be solicited regarding the relative value and trade-offs of initiatives and other discretionary expenditures. OIT will then submit a final version of the plan to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost for review and approval.