

BOT 4.1

Department of Media Studies Special Fee Proposal

College of Arts and Sciences

Fall 2017

Overview

The Department of Media Studies (MST) seeks approval for a Special Fee of \$100 per Academic Year (\$50 per semester) to apply to all MST undergraduate majors (AOS code: **U 134**).

Based on an average of 320 MST majors per AY (MST's average enrollment between Fall 2015 – Fall 2017), we anticipate the fee generating \$32,000 per Academic Year.

Amount Requested – \$100 (total annual full-time rate per student)

Total Anticipated Revenue – \$32,000

Justification for and Planned Use of Proposed Special Fee

Justification

The primary purpose of the proposed Special Fee is to enable MST to purchase, repair, and update specialized video production equipment, digital media equipment and technology, as well as video editing software that are taught in and used in the instruction of undergraduate Media Studies courses taken by MST majors only.

In order to provide students with a meaningful media production education and transferrable 21st century skills, MST must teach students how to use production equipment, digital media technologies, and software. This requires MST to provide (e.g., purchase, license) these for students to learn on and utilize in the context of instruction at a level that exceeds what is normally provided by the budget for course materials and supplies. These types of expenditures permit advanced media courses that are taken by MST majors only; the academic budget provides sufficient support for intro-level equipment, but is insufficient for the purchase and upkeep of video production (film, television, and news). Only in this way can we develop in students the qualities that will enable them to obtain employment in the very competitive media industry upon graduation.

Because media technologies, production equipment, and editing software change quickly and dramatically, so do Media Studies' technology, equipment, and software needs. Furthermore, video production equipment (e.g., lighting kits, cameras) is expensive, suffers significant wear and breakage, and is costly to repair and replace. In fact, even when students work in groups of 3-5, MST must limit class sizes and the number of course sections offered, because we do not have enough equipment for students to use. As documented in departmental Student Learning Assessment Reports, faculty have become increasingly concerned that MST's unmet (and perpetual) equipment needs may be impeding

student learning and instruction, and students regularly complain about the lack of functioning equipment and licensed video editing software (as confirmed by Student Survey #1, detailed below).

Additionally, it is not feasible to require students, individually, to purchase their own equipment. UNCG serves diverse and first-generation student populations, and many of our students struggle to pay tuition; they do not have the disposable income to purchase their own professional-level production equipment and licensed software. The industry standard video editing, animation, and effects software that is taught to our majors is only available on Apple computers. There are no Apple labs on campus that have the software and hardware capabilities necessary for course assignments other than the lab in our Carmichael Building. Requiring our majors to pay an additional \$100 per year is a cost-effective method to enable us to provide access to relevant equipment and licensed, updated software in that Carmichael lab, and prepare our students to enter the workforce upon graduation.

Planned Use of Proposed Fee

The use of the fee will directly correspond to concerns expressed by MST students (detailed in the Consultations section below), in departmental Instructional Effectiveness (Academic Assessment) Reports, and articulated by Outside Reviewers who participated in the Department of Media Studies' 2014-15 Departmental Review. Specifically, fee revenue would support the curriculum and instruction of majors in the following ways:

- to purchase video production equipment (primarily cameras, lighting kits, video production and motion software, computers) used in specialized video production courses (including Independent Study courses). (Funds will not be used toward equipment used in projects that lack significant student participation)
- to repair specialized equipment
- to update (and license) industry standard editing software
- to update (and license or purchase) computer software (including AfterEffects, Final Cut, etc.) used in production, screenwriting, and animation courses

Consultations

College of Arts & Sciences

The Department of Media Studies first broached the idea of establishing a Fee at the conclusion of its Departmental Self-Study (conducted 2014-15). The Outside Reviewer's Report noted our antiquated software and lack of filmmaking/video production equipment, and recommended specific software (Final Cut Pro) and equipment updates. In Spring 2015, MST faculty raised this issue with the (then) Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.

In Fall 2015, the MST Interim Head and the Dean signed a Memorandum of Understanding acknowledging these equipment and funding-adjacent concerns, and authorizing MST to begin investigating the implementation of a Special Fee.

In early Spring 2017, MST consulted with the new Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who instructed MST to vigorously pursue the issue. Additionally, MST included in its 2017-18 Budget Requests (submitted to the College in Spring 2017) its intent to submit a proposal to establish the student fee.

Consultation with Students

At the end of the Spring 2017 semester, the department surveyed students regarding their support of a Special Fee. This new survey reflected a cross-section of MST majors (including production, news/digital journalism, and film studies students). Over 75% of students expressed support for a \$100 fee. Of these, one-third also indicated that they would support a much larger fee if necessary to gain access to the specialized equipment described in this proposal.

Costs of Comparable Programs

In Spring 2017, MST reviewed the cost of obtaining an education at other schools with comparable programs.

UNCW (Film Studies Dept.) (280 majors)

Students pay an insurance fee of approximately \$12 per course that “assign motion picture production projects,” but there is no additional student fee. Instead, the department receives “operating funds dedicated [specifically] to production and post-production and projection equipment,” and these are supplemented by ETF funds are distributed to department “according to established and justified need.” *(MST no longer receives operating funds specifically dedicated to equipment)*

UNC-Charlotte (Film Studies minor, housed within College of Liberal Arts & Sciences)

UNC-C imposes a laptop requirement for all students (MacBook Pro is \$1800, and a software subscription is \$327 per year for students). *(By comparison, the proposed MST-UNCG fee would cost MST students an average of \$400, and provide students with access to comparable software, computer, and editing programs)*

UNC Pembroke (110 majors)

Art Department requires students *and students taking video production courses* to purchase Adobe Creative Cloud (typically as a month-to-month subscription, so that it can be cancelled when the student is “not taking a production course”). No additional, separate fee is imposed

on video production students “but only because the video component of our degree is so small.” (Those students already fall within the mandate to purchase individual Adobe software). The department had previously “tried including student production fees within the tuition package but it [was] problematic . . . meaning technically they cannot drop a student from the course due to nonpayment [of fee.]” *(NB: MST is not representing that this assertion regarding nonpayment and dropping students is accurate; we are simply reporting what we were told about why UNCP does not implement a broader fee).*

Ithaca College [private institution] (Department of Communications Studies, includes Communication Studies Major and Culture and Communication Major) (200 majors)

The department previously charged students a \$200 “lab fee,” per relevant course, to pay for equipment and other items used in designated courses. The Provost’s Office decided to discontinue separate students/course/departmental fees. The department stated that it continues to disagree with elimination of the fee.