

Special Called Meeting
October 31, 2023

BOT – 2.3(b) Department of Information, Library, and Research Sciences Post Baccalaureate Certificate in Instructional Design

1. Overview

The Department of Information, Library, and Research Sciences (ILRS) has recently launched a fully online Post Baccalaureate Certificate in Instructional Design (PBC-ID) program preparing students for careers in the growing and in-demand fields of instructional technology and instructional design.

The PBC-ID was launched in 2021 and requires 12 credit hours. These credit hours correspond to required courses of the Master of Science in Instructional Technology and Design (MS-ITD), such that the MS-ITD and the PBC-ID are “stackable programs”, whereby students who complete the PBC-ID may apply these courses towards completion of the MS-ITD. Concurrent with this PBC-ID differential tuition proposal, an analogous differential tuition proposal is being submitted for the MS-ITD program.

This is a request for differential tuition for the PBC-ID program. The purpose of the differential tuition is to enhance the student support and access to the array of current technology required to preparation as a highly qualified professional in the fields of instructional design and instructional technology. The requested differential tuition is \$25 per student credit hour (SCH).

Amount Requested: \$25 per SCH for each course in the PBC-ID

Total Expected Annual Revenue: \$7,500 from the PBC-ID

Total Increase in Student Cost: \$300 for completion of the PBC-ID program

2. Description and Justification

Over the past decade, there has been a rapid proliferation of the number and types of emerging technologies that professionals in instructional technology and design utilize in their everyday work (see Lachheb & Boling, 2018). Meeting this growing demand for professionals in these

areas requires extensive, hands-on training in instructional design authoring tools as well as in emerging instructional and communication technologies (see Klein & Kelly, 2018; Wang et al., 2021). As a result, it is critical for the career success of our students in the PBC-ID program to gain mastery of this technology. At the same time, access to this technology – along with the needed support for learning how to use the software in real time – is challenging for online learners (recall that the PBC-ID is an online program); online learners are not able to make use of a physical computer lab in person, and providing additional online learning supports becomes critical.

To address this challenge, we seek to integrate the availability of current technology throughout their training, while also providing needed ongoing support in using the technology in practical contexts so that our graduates are adequately prepared to meet the professional demands of their career. Through the use of the differential tuition revenue, our PBC-ID program will provide students the following:

- a) Individual access to relevant instructional and communication technologies for students to use on their own computers through licensing keys.
- b) Support to the department for acquiring, administering, and supporting students with these technologies.

Specific technologies and supports, along with cost information, are provided below under the section #6, *Proposed Use of Differential Tuition Revenue*.

3. Trends in Program Enrollment

Enrollment data indicates a positive trend in enrollment in the PBC-ID program (see Table 1). Please note that the PBC-ID was first launched in 2021 in the midst of a pandemic with little marketing. Our anticipation of continued growth in enrollment is based on the growing need for instructional design professionals and outreach efforts by the department. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 7.2-8.1% growth in instructional design and technology positions through 2030 ([Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Projections](#)). The need for instructional technology and instructional design professionals is also reflected at the state level, with employment for training and development specialists predicted to grow 12 percent in North Carolina by 2028 ([NC Employment Trends for Training and Development Specialists](#)).

Table 1. Headcount Enrollment for the PBC-ID Program

Fall Enrollment for PBC-ID	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (projected)	2025 (projected)	2026 (projected)
	--	1	15	14*	15	20	25

* Official census data from Spring 2023, the most recent data available

4. Cost and Impact of Differential Tuition

This is the first request for differential tuition for the PBC-ID program. We are requesting a \$25 per SCH increase which will result in a \$300 increase in total tuition cost for the completion of the PBC-ID program.

To determine the impact of the proposed differential tuition on students in the PBC-ID program, the department administered an anonymous online survey via Qualtrics to 44 current and former students of both the PBC-ID and MS-ITD programs. One question asked the extent to which a tuition increase of \$25 per credit hour (\$75 per class) would have negatively impacted their decision to enroll. This question used a 5-point Likert scale where 1=would NOT have impacted my decision and 5=would have impacted my decision a great deal. Additionally, we asked whether having access to content authoring software during their program would have impacted their decision to enroll, using the same 1-5 Likert scale. Lastly, we compared the tuition costs of comparative and aspirational online instructional design and technology programs (see next section for details).

It is germane to note that the respondents from the PBC-ID and MS-ITD programs share notable similarities: (a) there is substantial similarity in the career progression and the need for training in the technology supported by the differential tuition across the two programs; and (b) there is overlap in the populations completing the PBC-ID and the MS-ITD, whereby a portion of the students completing the PBC-ID later enroll in the MS-ITD. As a result of these similarities, it was decided to aggregate the students and alumni across both programs together into one single collapsed sample for the purposes of drawing statistical inferences about the impact of the differential tuition on students in the PBC-ID program.

In total, 9 people across both the PBC-ID ($n = 2$) and MS-ITD ($n = 7$) programs completed the survey for a participation rate of about 20%. Results are displayed below in Table 2. Students indicated a strong desire for access to content authoring software (mean response = 4.67, reflecting a strong positive impact on enrollment); all responses indicated this access would have greatly (5) or somewhat (4) positively impacted their decision to enroll in the program. The mean response for the impact of a \$25 differential tuition was 2.44, reflecting an overall low level of impact. Written responses clarified that a substantial portion of any expressed impact was that students were uncertain of the cost and importance of various authoring programs. Therefore, explaining the cost and employer expectation around authoring programs may help alleviate any negative perceptions of the increased tuition.

Table 2. Current and Former Student Responses to Differential Tuition Survey

Survey Question	Mean Response	Range	N
Positive impact of access to authoring programs on intent to enroll	4.67	4-5	9
Negative impact of \$25 differential tuition on intent to enroll	2.44	1-4	9

5. Peer Comparison Data

In preparing this differential tuition request, the costs of in- and out-of-state peer and aspirational programs were reviewed to assess how this increase would impact the PBC-ID programs' competitiveness in the online market (see Table 3). The proposed tuition differential will slightly increase the already existing difference in tuition between UNCG and other comparative programs in the UNC system. Additionally, the UNCG PBC-ID requires less credit hours than comparative certificates offered in the UNC system. For out-of-state students, the PBC-ID program's tuition would still be below 4 out of the 5 comparative programs in the UNC system. Outside of the UNC system, UNCG's program will remain less expensive than peer programs, and much less expensive than aspirational programs.

Additionally, free access to authoring tools as part of the program's learning experience is likely a unique offering in the UNC system. Our program website and marketing materials would be updated to highlight this unique offering, allowing the program to remain highly competitive despite the slight cost increase.

Table 3. Tuition Costs for Benchmark Online Instructional Design and Technology Programs, 2022-23

University	Per Credit Hour In-State	Per Credit Hour Out of State	Fees per Credit Hour	In State Full-Time Semester Total*	Out of State Full-Time Semester Total*	Source
UNCG	289.94	579.88**	50.54	3,078.36	5,765.86**	LINK
Comparative Programs in UNC System Universities						
UNCC	248.17	496.33**	40.65	2,538.50	4,772.00**	LINK
ECU	263.83	994.33	26.72	2,614.95	9,180.45	LINK
UNCW	276.62	1,119.73	33.12	2,787.47	10,375.47	LINK
NCCU	298.73	1,038.07	Unknown	2,688.57	9,342.63	LINK
App State	268.83	1,102.72	35.39	2,807.98	10,312.99	LINK

Peer Institution Programs Outside of NC						
Georgia Southern	358.00 (not based on residency)		100.00	3,322.00 (not based on residency)		LINK
Western Michigan	764.76 (not based on residency)		258.50 per semester	6,882.84 (not based on residency)		LINK
Online University Programs						
Arizona State Online	565.00 (not based on residency)		127.00	5,944.00 (not based on residency)		LINK
Purdue Online	378.00	420.00	Unknown	3,402.00	3,780.00***	LINK
Aspirational University Programs						
Indiana University	320.00	450.00	39.00	3,231.00	4,401.00	LINK
University of Georgia	629.00 (not based on residency)		147.00	6,984.00 (not based on residency)		LINK
NC State	525.50	1,635.17	27.79	4,979.64	14,966.64	LINK

* Tuition is based on 9 graduate SCH hours

** Reflects the “outside of NC” rate for distance programs

*** Program requires 60 credits

6. Proposed Use of Differential Tuition Revenue

If approved, this differential tuition will ultimately generate an estimated average of \$7,500 per year. Table 4 presents a summary of revenue generation in the first three years.

Table 4. Differential Tuition Revenue and Expenditures

Projected Revenues	2024-2025 *1st Year Students Only	2025-2026 1st & 2nd year Students	2026-2027 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Year Students
Average SCH Per Student Per Year	12	12	12
PBC Anticipated enrollment	15	20	25
PBC Total SCH per year subject	180	240	300
PBC Estimated Revenues	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$7,500

*Differential tuition, if approved for the 2024-2025 year, will be for first year students only. Revenue and expenses for subsequent years include 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students.

(A) Technology Licenses

Please see Table 5, below, for an example list of commonly used content authoring tools and their associated costs. Throughout the program, students complete real world instructional projects individually and in small groups. Based on the budget and current trends in the field, we would select from the tools below and incorporate these into current coursework (at any point in time, some of these examples would be in use, but not all). Additionally, if approved, students enrolled in the MS-ITD program will also pay differential tuition, increasing the total amount we are able to spend on technology licenses serving the same purpose across the PBC-ID and MS-ITD programs. Through team/multi-user discounts, and also knowing that each student only requires access to a particular software for a part of the year (e.g., just one semester while it is used in a particular course), we will be able to take advantage of our economy of scale to ensure each student has access to needed software.

Table 5. Example Cost of Content Authoring Tools Commonly Used in Instructional Design

Content Authoring Tool	Annual Cost Per Student	Notes
Articulate 360 (includes Storyline and Rise)	\$699 per user with discounts on 10+ users (team)	Industry standard; “Most in demand technical skill for instructional designers” (Devlin Peck Blog)
Adobe Captivate	\$407.88 per user with potential discount for education users	Excellent for software simulation and training
EdApp	Free option is appropriate for our needs	Excellent for mobile and microlearning
iSpring Suite	\$670 per user with discount for 5+ users (team)	Similar to Articulate 360, including multiple tools/options
Chameleon Creator	\$12,000 for 10 users (team; \$1,500 per user for freelance accounts)	Onboarding, corporate environments
Brainshark	Pricing by contract only	Combination content authoring and LMS; popular in corporate settings

(B) Support Student Retention and Success

About 25% of these tuition revenues will be used to support student retention and success. In particular, a portion will be used to contribute to stipend packages to support appropriate graduate assistant positions for our more experienced MS-ITD or PBC-ID students who will provide technical and instructional design support to other students in the PBC-ID program (e.g., creating technology tool tutorials, providing 1:1 technology support). Graduate assistantships

will also support the program by assisting with marketing and student recruitment efforts (i.e., supporting access), and program assessment and evaluation.

7. References

Klein, J. D., & Kelly, W. Q. (2018). Competencies for instructional designers: A view from employers. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 31(3), 225-247.

Lachheb, A., & Boling, E. (2018). Design tools in practice: Instructional designers report which tools they use and why. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 30, 34-54.

Wang, X., Chen, Y., Ritzhaupt, A. D., & Martin, F. (2021). Examining competencies for the instructional design professional: An exploratory job announcement analysis. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 25(2), 95-123.