



Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) Meeting Minutes

Date: May 7, 2025

Location: USU Ballroom

Attendees

- Beth Lesen, Chair
- Andre Achacon
- Ryan Fischer
- Praveen Soni
- Milton Ordonez
- Marianne Hata
- Matt Melendrez
- Nikki Majidi
- Rico Ovalles
- Suzie Payne

1. **Welcome**
Beth Lesen, Chair

2. **Fee Requests:**

**College of Engineering Category III (Misc. Course Fees)
COE requests new course fees to be effective Spring 2026:**

SFAC Req#	Department	Course Fee Name	Fee Amount
582	Biomedical Engr	BME Course Fees	\$146
583	Chemical Engr	CH E Course Fees	\$150
584	Civil and Constructional Engr Mgmt	CECEM Course Fees	\$150
585	Mechanical and Aerospace Engr	MAE Course Fees	\$149
586	Electrical Engr	EE Course Fees	\$142

Committee members reviewed a proposed course fee related to project-based learning and laboratory courses within the College of Engineering.

Andre Achacon asked whether the proposed fees were tied to project-based learning and labs, and what the impact would be if course fees were not implemented. He also questioned why course fees were being considered at this time.

Jinny Rhee explained that historically the college relied on IRA and SEF technology funding. However, the College of Engineering has experienced significant growth while those funding sources have remained flat. Rising costs have limited the ability for students to advance projects to the prototype phase, and without additional funding fewer students would be able to fully engage in hands-on learning.

The MAE Department Chair noted that project costs have increased substantially over time, from hundreds of dollars to thousands of dollars. The department has relied on donors and other supporters to offset costs. Many student projects require work seven days a week, necessitating increased technology resources and supervision.

The EE Department Chair shared that the proposed fee would ensure students have access to required lab kits and components. The kits provide sufficient resources per student and allow access to the most current technology, which continues to evolve.

Ryan Fischer asked for clarification on the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (MAE) fee, which was identified as \$149 per course, and when students would be charged.

Praveen Soni asked about current funding sources and whether the program was already being supported by other funds. It was clarified that the proposed fee represents additional funding needed beyond existing resources.

Milton Ordonez asked whether tariffs had been factored into cost increases. Dean Rhee responded that tariffs were not included.

Concerns were raised by several committee members:

- Praveen, Nikki, Andre, and Matt expressed discomfort voting on the proposal at this time.
- Andre noted that it appeared course fees were being used to compensate for reduced IRA and other funding sources.



- Marianne Hata commented that material fees may have been appropriate historically but had not been implemented.
- Praveen expressed concern about how the proposal was presented.

Andre raised concerns about equity and access, stating that it could be perceived as charging students more simply because they are engineering majors.

Nikki echoed concerns related to student accessibility.

Milton Ordonez emphasized that as a top-ranked college, the committee should carefully evaluate whether course fees are the appropriate mechanism.

Rico asked whether engineering students had been consulted during the development of the proposal. Andre further suggested exploring opportunities to reinvest institutional funds into the College of Engineering and encouraged the university to re-examine budgeting practices.

Suzie noted that providing a detailed cost analysis would strengthen future proposals. The committee emphasized the need for greater transparency and specificity.

Vote Outcome:

5 opposed

2 abstentions

Based on the discussion, the committee did not approve the fee request and recommended that the proposal return for reconsideration, with additional information and analysis.

3. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at **10:05 a.m.**