

FY10 Technology Fee Proposal Instructions

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1.0 Overview

The Technology Fee, or Tech Fee, is paid by all students each semester. Among other things, the proceeds are used to support acquisition of network infrastructure equipment, student project team equipment, laboratory and classroom instructional technology, and software. Students, faculty, and staff may submit proposals to be funded from the Technology Fee. The University System Board of Regents established general guidelines for Tech Fee usage. These guidelines are included in Appendix A. The procedure for allocating the funds is left to SPSU to decide and the current proposal-driven process was chosen.

The following is a simplified description of the proposal review and funding process. Additional information is available on the Information Technology Division (IT) web site at <http://www.spsu.edu/techfee/>.

Proposals are written by students, faculty and staff and submitted to their appropriate administrative and Information Technology Division (IT) reviewers. For example, faculty proposals are reviewed by the Department Chair and Dean as well as IT. Once reviewed, the completed proposals are submitted to one of three TRIO committees depending on the proposal origin. Student proposals are submitted through the Student Government Association (SGA), faculty and staff proposals from Academic Affairs are submitted to a committee with representatives from each School, and Information Technology Division proposals are submitted through the division's internal committee and Chief Information Officer (CIO). Once proposals are processed by the TRIO committees, they are forwarded to the TFERT (Tech Fee Expenditure Review Team) and from there on to the President for final approval. Proposals are approved for adherence to the Regents' guidelines at the TRIO level and usually prioritized within the TRIO groups. The TRIO groups can recommend partial instead of full funding of the proposals. At the TFERT level, all proposals are prioritized with respect to each other. The TFERT can also recommend partial or full funding of proposals. The rankings are forwarded to the President for final adjustment. Appendix B has a flow chart to illustrate the process.

Letters are sent to proposal authors by the CIO informing them as to the results of the ranking process, indicating if and approximately when funding would become available for their project. Funds are allocated from highest- to lower-priority proposals until funding runs out. Funding of projects begins with the new fiscal year in summer and continues throughout the fall, and spring semesters as tech fee funds become available.

2.0 Detailed Instructions for Completing the Proposal Form

The proposal forms are relatively easy to fill out, but it is important that authors are as thorough as possible when completing the form. Keep in mind that TRIO and TFERT committee members reading and evaluating proposals may not understand discipline-specific terminology you use. ***Ambiguous or incomplete proposals can lead to unnecessarily-low rankings by the committees.***

Instructions for completing the proposal sections are given below. The proposal form is a Microsoft Word document in tabular format. You enter text in the table cells where appropriate. When completed, print the document and forward to the administrative and IT reviewers for signatures. An electronic version of the proposal is sent directly to the appropriate TRIO committee. See Section 3.0 for more information on proposal submission.

Fiscal Year – write the fiscal year for which the proposal applies. The fiscal year is the same as that of the academic year's spring semester. For example, proposals due in January 2008 are written for Fiscal Year 2009.

Project Number – Leave blank. The project number is assigned by TRIO and TFERT committees

Project Title – ***Give the project a simple but descriptive title.*** The title should convey what will be purchased and where it will be used or which organization will use it. For example, use a title like "Two New Oscilloscopes for Robotics Team" instead of one like "New Equipment for Robotics Team." Another example of a good title is "New Projector and Smart Board for G-153 Classroom." Do not get carried away with the descriptive title. Fifteen words are too many.

Contact Information – This section is self-explanatory. Although most proposals have a single author, some have two. The first author will be the main contact person. ***If a proposal is collaborative, contact information for the collaborating authors must be given.*** Also, ***student proposals require a second contact person.*** Use the co-author space for the second contact. It is not unusual for student authors to graduate before their proposal is funded. Therefore, the second contact for a student proposal should be another student who will not graduate by the time the proposal is funded or the student's faculty reviewer (see the Reviews section below).

Collaboration – Collaboration can take on many forms. Three examples are: two student groups can collaborate, so can two faculty members from different departments, or a faculty member can work with a student group. ***Collaboration on proposals is encouraged and can lead to high priority in final rankings.*** This is particularly true for proposals of strategic importance to SPSU. For example, a faculty proposal to purchase laboratory equipment for a new multidisciplinary degree program supported by two departments is important not only to help the new degree but to encourage synergistic cooperation between the departments. Another example of strategic collaboration is two student project groups working on a proposal together to purchase expensive equipment that they intend to share. Of course, there are other types of collaboration with different levels of strategic interest.

Merely citing collaboration on the proposal is not sufficient to ensure a high priority ranking. For example, two professors from the same department or from two closely-associated departments in the same school co-authoring a proposal are not necessarily fostering a strategic collaboration as they likely interact with one another on a daily basis. Also, a proposal citing collaboration between a faculty member and students

is not usually strategically collaborative as ***it is expected*** that students are the most important beneficiary of all Tech Fee proposals no matter who writes them.

Important: Even a strategic collaborative proposal that would tend to receive a strong ranking based on collaboration may be ranked lower if it is written poorly or is not meritorious.

With the preceding in mind, answer the questions in the collaboration section as completely as possible. It should be clear how and to what degree students and the collaborative groups will benefit from the project.

Project Description – In the Description section, ***clearly and concisely*** explain the project. The better your description, the fewer questions reviewers will have. Make sure that it is obvious how the equipment, software, etc. are to be deployed and used. Be aware that committee members evaluating projects are not always familiar with discipline-specific equipment and jargon. Include links to web sites or attach catalog pages to the proposal that describe the key items to be purchased.

Also include an ***itemized cost breakdown*** of the key items to be purchased in this section or an appendix to the proposal. Note that costs are summarized in the “Cost Summary” section.

In the Questions section, answer the questions as completely and accurately as possible. Use “N/A” as the answer for non-applicable questions. Regarding the question about continuation of a previous Tech Fee proposal, an example of this situation is when an earlier proposal partially funded a laboratory equipment purchase and the current proposal is going to complete the equipment purchase. Another example is a proposal written for funding of a software maintenance fee each year.

When addressing the Regents’ guidelines ***write the applicable guidelines*** (the bold text associated with the guideline is fine) and state how they apply to the project. See Appendix A for the list of guidelines.

Partial Funding Options – If your project has partial funding options, state them here. One example where providing a partial funding option is a good idea is in a major laboratory upgrade involving purchasing computers and test instrumentation where the total cost is say \$40,000. If the test instrumentation is the highest priority, cite its purchase as the partial funding option. If you do not provide partial funding options, the TRIO or TFERT committees may decide on one for you.

It is not necessary to repeat the itemized cost breakdown of key items here if those costs were already given elsewhere.

Cost Summary – The first table for the Fully-Funded Project Cost must be filled in. The other tables are for partial funding options, if applicable. Complete a table for each partial funding option you have. Add additional tables if you need to.

Reviews – In order to encourage interesting Tech Fee proposals from students, faculty, and staff, proposals are reviewed and not “approved.” That is, SGA, administrative or IT Division reviewers cannot simply stop a proposal from moving forward to the TRIO and TFERT committees. However, as part of their review, they can suggest changes to the proposal. They can also include comments as part of the proposal in the **Reviewer Comments** section.

Proposals from students require one faculty advisor reviewer. Faculty-originated proposals require review by the Department Chair and School Dean. Staff-originated proposals require review by the department or division director.

The Faculty TRIO committee typically requests that the Department Chairs rank the proposals originating in their departments according to their overall importance to the department. Similarly, the Faculty TRIO committee requests the school deans do the same for proposals originating from the departments in their schools. This ranking information is not included in the proposal itself, but communicated directly to the committee. This information helps the TRIO and TFERT committees put the proposals in perspective; however, the TRIO and TFERT committees are not bound by the priority rankings of the Deans and Department Chairs.

3.0 Proposal Submission

Tech Fee proposal submission deadlines are established and communicated to students, faculty, and staff by the CIO. The submission deadline is usually near the end of January and reminders are sent prior to the end of the fall semester.

Electronic and paper copies of the proposals must be sent to the three TRIO committee coordinators before the deadline. Another electronic copy of the proposal must be sent to Trish Buchanan in the CIO's office (tbuchana@spsu.edu). The electronic version may not have all reviewer signatures but the paper version must have them. The electronic version may be submitted as either a Microsoft Word compatible document or as an Adobe Acrobat compatible document.

Revised versions of proposals may not be submitted after the deadline unless clarifications are requested by the TRIO committees. If a clarification is requested, address the specific questions in your response. This is not meant as an opportunity to rewrite the proposal to make it better. This is unfair to the other proposal authors.

Appendix A – Regents’ Tech Fee Guidelines

The [Board of Regents technology fee] Review Team recommends that technology fee expenditure guidelines should be based upon two fundamental principles.

Student technology fee revenues should not be used to supplant current levels of technology fee expenditures. Institutions should provide evidence that overall institution technology expenditures clearly reflect that expenditures based upon fee revenues are above and beyond normal levels.

The focus of the student technology fees should be on academic or instructional technology and distinctions should be drawn between expenditures for administrative applications or scientific and laboratory equipment, and instructional technology.

With respect to the second principle, technology fee revenues should be directed toward those needs that directly meet the educational value criterion established in the Chancellor’s approval letters; i.e., the fees provide added value to the educational experiences of the students. We define this value to be instructionally oriented and not oriented toward other services such as housing registration, advising, record keeping, etc., important as these services are to a student’s overall collegiate experiences.

The guidelines in bold print below are not prescriptive but rather are intended to provide a framework for local institutional decisions.

[1] Technology fee revenues should be used primarily for the direct benefit of students to assist them in meeting the educational objectives of their academic programs. At this point in the evolution of collegiate academic technologies, access is important: access to productivity tools, discipline specific software packages, computers and printers, internal and external databases, introductory and advanced training, and access to networks (from home or from campus). Therefore, high priorities should be given to the use of technology fees for these purposes.

[2] Technology fee revenue should be used to assure that there are sufficient campus licenses for primary productivity tools such as those found in the Microsoft Office product suites for discipline specific software. The fees should be used to assure that students have easy access to tools and software packages that are critical within their chosen disciplines. This range from computer assisted design through music composition, art and drawing tools, scientific notation, modeling, and other discipline specific analytical tools. Appropriate computer based or web-based instructional modules are appropriate as well.

[3] Technology fee revenues should be used for hardware and network related expenditures that include support of general-purpose laboratories used by students for body productivity and more discipline related activities. Provision of adequate network bandwidth and access to the Internet and special purpose databases and specialized computing are vitally important in some disciplines and should be supported. At the same time, institutions will need to balance competing demands for greater and broader access to resources for all students versus the demand for important but specialized and restricted resources.

[4] Technology fee revenues may be used for training of students and, to a lesser extent, staff and faculty. Students and faculty perceive good training in the use of computing and networking resources as an important component of effective use of electronic instructional resources both inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, the secondary educational value is high; training allows students and faculty to focus on course content rather than on the mechanics of operating a computer. In general, staff and faculty training should be supported

from operational funds. Obvious exceptions include circumstances such as space remaining available in a training session after student sign-up is completed, or the purchase of a site license for online training that permits access by all members of the campus community.

[5] Technology fee revenues may be used to leverage other funds where appropriate.

Keeping in mind the second fundamental principle, there are circumstances where a grant or other or one-time allocation could be combined with technology fee revenues to yield greater access or resources for the students.

[6] Technology fee revenues may be used – with caution – for new staffing that is either temporary or ongoing.

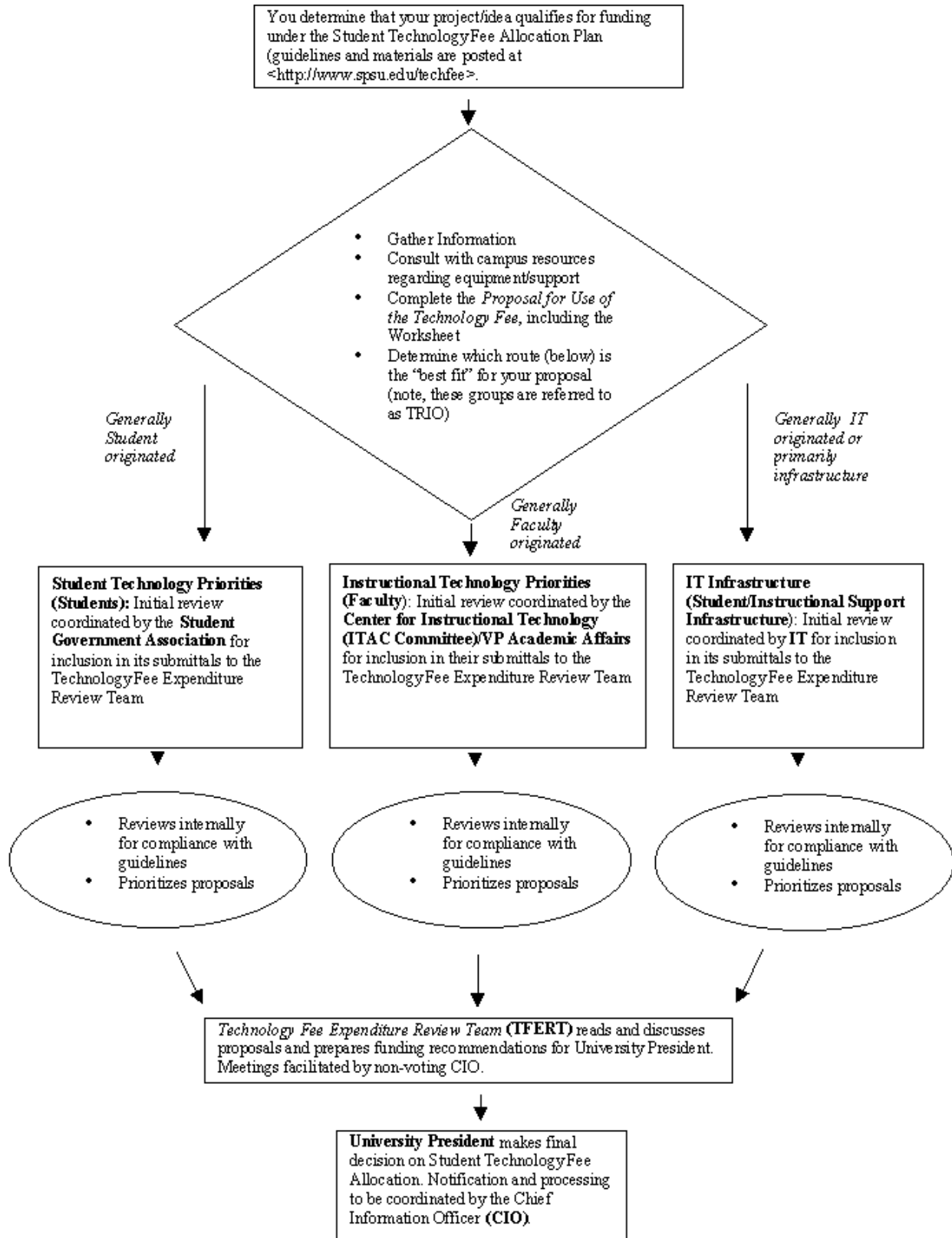
Institutions should continue to focus on the criterion established initially by the Chancellor's approval letter – the fees provide added value to the educational experiences of students. Where additional staffing clearly will provide added value to students – and the value can be documented – technology fee expenditures may be warranted. For example, hiring temporary trainers may be the best way to ensure that all incoming freshmen and transfers receive a thorough information technology orientation session. However, under no circumstances should technology fee revenues be used to fund existing positions that would otherwise be cut from an operational budget, nor should fees be used to fund general computing and networking positions that have a significant administrative or research support component. Institutions are encouraged to develop a formal process of review for proposed student technology fee staffing expenditures to ensure continued awareness of this guideline.

[7] Lower priority uses of technology fee revenues include development of software packages, acquisition of one of a kind software or hardware products for faculty use in training and consumable supplies such as printer paper.

[8] In almost no cases should technology fee revenues be used for administrative software or software implementation (such as BANNER), administrative hardware, research equipment, non-networkable specialized scientific equipment, space renovation, or other items or activities that do not have a direct and immediate impact upon students instructional objectives.

Appendix B – Proposal Review Process

The flow chart below illustrates the Tech Fee proposal review process.



Appendix C – Hints For Writing a Better Proposal

The following hints are meant to help proposal authors write more successful proposals. Some of the hints are really common sense.

1. Take your time and make sure you answer all questions on the proposal form.
2. **Make the proposal title as descriptive as possible.** For example, a title like “15 Computers for and Graphics Software for Design Lab” is much better than “Design Lab Improvements.”
3. **Make sure the project description is complete and unambiguous.** Reviewers on the TRIO and TFERT committees may not be familiar with aspects of your discipline or the particular operating characteristics of the equipment you wish to purchase.
4. **Keep a running list of items for which you may want to write a Tech Fee proposal.** Sometimes you think of an item in the middle of the spring semester but forget it by the time the proposal deadline arrives.
5. Start gathering supporting documentation and prices for your project early. It always takes longer than you think to get price quotes.
6. Be aware that the TFERT usually rejects proposal line items that are for furniture or expendable supplies. For example, podiums and computer desks are not usually covered. This is due to the customary interpretation of the Regents’ guidelines. **However, go ahead and include these items and their prices in the proposal anyway.** You never know if the TFERT policy will change.
7. The TFERT often rejects proposals (disqualified for funding) that do not have a direct benefit to students. One recent example was a proposal from the Information Technology Division for a backup system for files on faculty computers. While clearly faculty have course-related files on their computers, this system would only indirectly benefit students. Another example was an academic affairs faculty/staff proposal for course development software. It would directly benefit faculty but not students. **If you have doubts as to the degree that your project would directly benefit students, you should submit it anyway.**
8. **Expensive proposals are at risk of being ranked lower than they ordinarily would based on their merits.** This is particularly true of faculty/staff academic affairs proposals. The academic affairs TRIO group is usually given a rough guideline as to the expected funding that will be available for academic affairs proposals. When evaluating proposals that request more than about 15% of this amount, the academic affairs TRIO committee members are concerned that fewer academic affairs proposals will be funded if the large ones are. There are usually over 40 academic affairs proposals submitted each year and the TRIO committee would like to help as many as possible get funded. **Therefore, include partial funding options in your proposal.**

Historically the highest cost academic affairs proposals funded are about \$40,000 and this is rare. Consider an “expensive” proposal to be about \$20,000 and up. Note that IT Division proposals can far exceed \$40,000 due to the cost of networking infrastructure equipment and the number of computers in the larger labs that they support. The IT Division also submits fewer proposals that does academic affairs faculty/staff.

9. In an average year, students usually submit fewer than 10 proposals. It is not clear why this is the case as the student proposals have a high probability of being funded and students get the same advanced notice as faculty. Nevertheless, this phenomenon has

Appendix C – Hints For Writing a Better Proposal

led to some “abuse” by faculty members who encourage a cooperative student to write a proposal that would ordinarily be a typical academic affairs faculty/staff proposal. Students are still encouraged to write proposals for projects that affect them in positive ways even if they have some resemblance to the typical faculty proposal, ***but it is important that the student initiate the proposal, not a faculty member.***

Recently, a proposal was submitted through the student TRIO committee, but the proposal author listed was a faculty member. No student’s name appeared. This was essentially an attempt to avoid the highly-competitive evaluation process in the academic affairs TRIO committee.

Faculty/staff are strongly discouraged from attempting to use the student TRIO process instead of the academic affairs TRIO process. The methodology is easily recognized by the TFERT.