

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Sense of Senate Resolution Number 0418S  
Date of Senate Approval: 02/08/2018

Reasons for denial by the Provost:

This proposal is denied. It is the position of the Provost that the fee is necessary and beneficial for both the Engineering Programs and the University of North Carolina Asheville.

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of our colleagues and of our students in the Department of Engineering we ask that our full Faculty Senate address the issue of a \$500 per semester "Special Fee" that is to be levied against our UNC Asheville engineering students. Specifically, we request that the UNC Asheville Faculty Senate ask the Board of Trustees to rescind their December approval of said "Special Fee" since it appears that our process and procedures for vetting such fee proposals have been bypassed. Below we offer to you details that seem to support that this proposal followed some accelerated process.

1. **Faculty Senate was not consulted concerning these fees.** Dr. Marietta Cameron became aware of these pending fees not in her role as Vice Chair of Faculty Senate, not in her role as Chair of Computer Science, but as a bypasser to a conversation in which a computer science student was expressing extreme concern about the fees to be levied against her friends in engineering. This conversation occurred on Friday, February 2, 2018. Each Senate Executive Committee (EC) colleague confirmed that no Senate Subcommittee received any documentation of these fees.

2. **Engineering Faculty were not consulted concerning these fees.** On Sunday Feb 4, 2018, EC received via email a letter from Dr. Rebecca Bruce outlining the manner in which faculty and students learned of the pending \$500 per semester fee – during a meeting on Feb 1, 2018 that resulted from a student petition. **Prior to that meeting, no engineering faculty participated in the deliberations of these fees.** Dr. Bruce reports that the justifications given were

1. the expensive nature of engineering programs,
2. a reported NC State concern about the inequity that NC State students pay a COE Program Enhancement Fee, (<https://www.engr.ncsu.edu/admissions/fee/>)
3. engineering utilization of the STEAM studio.

The breakdown of the expenses given was:

50% STEAM Studio  
30% UNC Asheville Engineering Program  
20% UNC Asheville Administration

Dr. Bruce's letter raises several concerns:

1. The engineering budget is funded by NC State not by UNC Asheville;
2. Comparing the UNC Asheville Engineering Fee to NC State's COE fee is unreasonable when one does not also compare the facilities offered by NC State, an institution that hosts an entire college dedicated to the discipline of Engineering, to the facilities offered by UNC Asheville our public liberal arts institution which hosts a program devoted to the discipline of Engineering;
3. The STEAM studio (<https://steamstudio.unca.edu/>) is open to all UNC Asheville students, but only the Engineering students required to heavily support this interdisciplinary collaboration.
4. The NC State Engineering College adamantly disapproves of this fee structure by UNC Asheville and is threatening to reduce financial support accordingly.

Dr. Bruce expresses dissatisfaction and disappointment with the few answers given. No written documentation was distributed during this meeting. Dr. Bruce's letter is attached to this document. It is also disturbing that the newly hired Director of the UNC Asheville Engineering Program was not involved in the deliberations concerning this fee.

**3. Engineering Students were not consulted concerning these fees.** Marietta Cameron met with engineering student, Andre Rucker, on February 6, 2018. He shared with her this timeline on how the engineering students learned of the pending fees:

1. January 1, 2018 the Citizen Times published this article: <http://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2018/01/01/unc-asheville-keeps-tuition-fees-steady-2018-19/994290001/>.
2. January 8, 2018 an engineering student received this article from a relative.
3. January 25 – Feb 1, 2018, Andre gathered signatures from approximately 90 engineering students requesting advocacy from the SGA.
4. Andre contacted SGA and was directed to contact Dr. Bill Haggard.
5. Feb 1, 2018 (4:00pm-5:15pm), a meeting was held in Karpen 038 led by Dr. Herman Holt, Dean of Natural Sciences; Dr. Keith Krumpke, former Dean of Natural Sciences; Mr. John Pierce, Vice Chancellor of Finance; Dr. Bill Haggard Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs; and Professor Brent Skidmore, CoFounder of STEAM and Associate Professor of Art.
6. Feb. 6, meets with Dr. Cameron.

Andre shared similar concerns mentioned in Dr. Bruce's letter. He also reports similar disappointment and dissatisfaction with the few answers given. He mentioned in one answer regarding why only Engineering students charged the special fee, facilitators stated that future multi-year plans involved levying fees against other UNC Asheville majors and that the engineering label would help the fee be more acceptable to the Board of Governors. A copy of the student petition as well as Andre's questions that he perceived to be unanswered are attached.

**4. The full UNC Asheville Committee on Tuition and Fees did not review this proposal.** Faculty members assigned to this non-Senate committee reported not meeting during the Fall 2017 semester and having no knowledge of this fee.

**5. The SGA was not consulted.** As of Feb 6, 2018, this issue has not been discussed in an open SGA meeting. One can offer the argument that since the SGA president sits on the

Board of Trustees and since the Board of Trustees approved these fees in December 2017, that the SGA was consulted through its representative on the Board of Trustees. Surely a fee that constitutes more 14% of an engineering student's cost merits the consideration of more than one single student.

**6. The NC State College of Engineering was not consulted.** Members of the engineering department report that NC State College of Engineering have stated that they will reduce the amount of their support due to this decision.

The above list supports a call for the Board of Trustees to rescind its approval on the basis that this proposal has not been sufficiently vetted. We ask that the board also reconsiders in terms of the following:

1. This proposed fee contradicts our efforts to insure accessibility to our nationally recognized liberal arts curriculum.
2. This proposed fee contradicts the UNC Systems efforts to insure accessibility to a high quality education.
3. This proposed fee will affect our ability to retain our engineering students. Consider that Western Carolina University, which is now part of the NC Promise Tuition Plan, offers a Bachelor's Degree program in Engineering: <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/programs/engineering-bse/index.asp>. The NC Promise for Western Carolina can be found at this URL: <https://www.wcu.edu/apply/undergraduate-admissions/costs-and-aid/ncpromise-faq.aspx>. Note that WCU will only charge a \$75.00 per semester fee. <https://www.wcu.edu/apply/tuition-and-fees/fall-spring-undergraduate-tuition-and-fees.aspx>
4. The proposed fee introduces inequity in terms of UNC Asheville students. As mentioned by both engineering faculty and students this fee will be the highest on our campus at 14% of the engineering students cost.

Colleagues,

We apologize for bringing this before you on such short notice, but as we have mentioned, this matter has only come to our attention within the last seven days. Our Board of Trustees will meet on February 23, 2018. It is our understanding that the Board of Governors will address this matter on March 23, 2018.

Therefore in light of the information and materials presented we make the following motion:

We moved that the UNC Asheville Faculty Senate request the following:

1. that the UNC Asheville Board of Trustees rescind their approval of the fees amounting to \$500 per semester to be levied against the UNC Asheville Engineering Students
2. that the UNC Board of Governors vote against any proposal that levies fees against UNC Asheville students.