The Student Technology Fee – Referendum Language
FINAL

I. Referendum Title

The Student Technology Fee

II. Complete Text of the Referendum

Introductory Statement

In compliance with University and campus policies, the purpose of the Student Technology Fee is to provide UC Berkeley students with technology services and tools to improve student life. The fee is sponsored by the ASUC and will benefit both undergraduate and graduate students. The fee will prioritize providing eligible-to-register, regular-status students with software packages such as Adobe and Microsoft, and/or other useful software packages, as well as funding new student technology initiatives and other student technology services and tools.

Background

Adobe and Microsoft software downloads are currently available at no cost to students. This offering to students started in 2011, with the understanding that the University would cover the costs with one-time discretionary funds for a period of two years and that, if students were interested in continuing to have Microsoft and Adobe software available to them, a Student Technology Fee would need to be implemented to continue to cover the costs of these software packages.

If this fee is not approved, the Adobe and Microsoft software downloads will no longer be available to students after August 2014. Currently the Adobe software contract is set to expire in August 2014 and will not be renewed for students unless funded by the Student Technology Fee. The Microsoft contract runs until January 2016 but the student portion will be dropped as of July 1, 2014 unless funded by the Student Technology Fee. The new fee does not guarantee that Adobe and Microsoft software downloads will continue to be available to students, but it will provide the funding needed for the University to continue negotiating these software contracts, or contracts for other software products, on behalf of students. In addition, the new funding put forth in this proposal for other student technology services and initiatives benefitting student life would not be available if the fee is not approved.

According to the student software download statistics, since June 2011, a total of 35,199 students have downloaded the Microsoft Productivity Suite and 29,098 students have downloaded the Adobe Creative Suite software.

Furthermore, the campus-wide survey conducted by the ASUC, Graduate Assembly (GA), and the Committee on Student Fees in the 2012-13 academic year asked if students would support

of a Student Technology Fee to fund software downloads and student technology projects. The survey resulted in 5,086 responses (3,272 from undergraduates and 1,814 from graduate students), comprising about 14% of the student population and constituting a fairly representative sample of the student demographic. Seventy-three percent responded that they would pay a student technology fee. Students also expressed an interest in improved and additional technology services.

UC Riverside and UC Santa Barbara have technology fees that are charged on a per unit per quarter basis ($4 and $2.50 each, respectively). These fees are used to supplement Information Technology on their campuses and provide software to students either in the form of downloads or virtual access. However, the ASUC and the Student Technology Council believe that such a fee should not be used to subsidize basic, core technology infrastructure and services provided by the University. To this end, the Student Technology Fee will provide for a Student Technology Fee Committee to review proposals for technology projects and make recommendations on the allocation of funds accordingly on a yearly basis.

Purpose of the Fee

In compliance with University and campus policies, the Student Technology Fee will provide the funding needed for the University to negotiate with Adobe, Microsoft and potentially other software providers on behalf of students. The fee will also provide funding for student technology services and initiatives based on proposals submitted to the Student Technology Fee Committee and approved by the Chancellor. This fee aims to provide students access to cutting edge technology and complement, but not subsidize, technology related to core infrastructure, academic programs, or services offered by the University.

Breakdown of the Fee

The fee will be assessed at $51 per semester per student in both the Fall and Spring ($102 per year) and will remain unchanged for its entire duration of seven years, starting in Fall 2014 and ending in Spring 2021. The fee will not be assessed for summer session students. In accordance with campus policy, thirty-three percent (33%) of the fee will be returned to financial aid to help offset the cost of this fee for students who are eligible for financial aid, up to $20 will be used toward the cost of providing software packages such as Adobe and Microsoft to students, and the remainder of the fee will go towards other student technology services and initiatives.

Oversight of the Fee

A Student Technology Fee Committee will be formed to oversee the use of the fee; accept and review proposals from students, faculty and staff on how to allocate fee revenues for software packages and new student technology initiatives; and recommend on the fee's use to the Chancellor.

The eleven (11) voting members of the committee will be as follows:

- Two representatives each from the ASUC, GA, and Committee on Student Fees.

- One representative each from the Academic Senate, ASUC Auxiliary, and the Student Affairs IT staff, in addition to one designee appointed by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and one designee appointed by the Associate Vice Chancellor–IT and CIO.

In addition, the committee will include a non-voting representative from the Campus Budget Office.

The committee will be co-chaired by one of the student representatives and one of Student Affairs representatives (e.g., the representative from the ASUC Auxiliary or Student Affairs IT, or the designee appointed by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs). The ASUC and GA will work with campus administration to determine committee procedures, guidelines for accepting proposals that do not subsidize basic, core technology infrastructure and services provided by the University, the timeline for allocating funds to cover the cost of software contracts, and other implementation details before collection of the fee begins.

III. Ballot Language

The following language will be placed on the Spring 2014 ASUC ballot for a vote of the student body:

"The Student Technology Fee will be a $51 fee per semester starting in Fall 2014 and ending in Spring 2021 to fund the cost of providing software packages such as Adobe and Microsoft to eligible-to-register, regular-status students as well as other student technology services and initiatives and will be assessed for both undergraduate and graduate students but will not be assessed for summer sessions students. Per campus policy, thirty-three percent (33%) of the fee will go towards return-to-aid. Do you approve of this fee?"