

2009-2010 Differential Tuition Update

by Brent Keller, Chair of Polygon Differential Tuition Committee

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Background

Engineering Differential Tuition was created to address issues of decreased access in the College of Engineering (CoE) as a result of decreasing state support and was approved by the UW Board of Regents in the spring of 2008. Engineering differential tuition has the following three objectives:

1. A high quality learning experience and engineering education to meet the needs of the 21st century
2. Reduced time to degree
3. Increased number of engineering graduates per year

Engineering Differential Tuition is being phased in over a three-year period and started in the fall of 2008. It increases tuition for CoE students in engineering departments by \$300/semester for the 2008-2009 school year, by \$500/semester for the 2009-2010 school year, and by \$700/semester for the 2010-2011 school year.

Engineering Differential Tuition is administered by two committees that make recommendations to the Dean of Engineering. The CoE Differential Tuition Advisory Committee consists of two students, two staff, and two faculty, and reviews proposals for use of differential tuition funds. The Polygon Student Differential Tuition Committee consists of four students who review student proposals for use of differential tuition funds, communicate student concerns and needs to the Dean of Engineering, and provide the student body with information about differential tuition allocations.

2009-2010 Allocations

Engineering Differential Tuition allowed significant investments to be made in CoE education during the 2009-2010 school year. A total of \$1,292,000 was invested in the categories of instruction (40%), CoE shops and labs (30%), student services (15%), and innovation in engineering education (15%).

In the category of instruction, a significant number of course sections were opened in high-demand majors to reduce or eliminate waitlists. Bottleneck courses that benefited from new sections and/or expanded enrollment included CEE 310, CEE 340, ECE 235, ECE 270, ECE 252, ECE 376, EMA 201, EMA 540, EPD 275, EPD 397, ME 307, ME 313, ME 368, and more. Investments were also made to expand admission to the Biomedical Engineering department, the highest demand major in the CoE, which can currently only accept one in three qualified students. Additionally, several high demand courses were redesigned: CBE 250 (online) and

CBE 324. Differential tuition also supported ECOW2, the CoE's online course management software, and InterEngr 102 – Grand Challenges in Engineering.

CoE shops and labs received significant support in 2009-2010 from differential tuition funds. Both students and practicing engineers have repeatedly identified hands-on experiences as a top priority for strengthening undergraduate engineering education. In the past five years, CoE Student Shop users have more than doubled and equipment use has quadrupled. Shop hours and staff support were expanded and equipment was upgraded using differential tuition and dollar-for-dollar match gift funds. Differential tuition also supported laboratory upgrades in CBE, ECE and BME.

Finally, Engineering Differential Tuition supported student services, including EGR advising, Supplementary Instruction programs, the Student Leadership Center, and innovations in engineering education including online education modules in technical communication, development of an interdisciplinary fluid mechanics course, and a coordinated teaching structure for mechanics of materials courses.

For more information about Engineering Differential Tuition, visit the Polygon Student Council website at www.engr.wisc.edu/studentorgs/polygon/ or email coe_dtc@cae.wisc.edu.