To: Student Technology Fee Committee  
From: Jill Davishahl, Assistant Professor, Engineering & Design  
Date: April 16, 2020  
Subject: Letter of Support: Makerspace Tech Initiative

Dear Student Technology Fee Committee –

I am writing this letter in support of the “Makerspace Tech Initiative” proposal submitted by Kevin Hjelstrom. As outlined in the proposal, this initiative is requesting funds to purchase equipment to support the newly opened Engineering & Design Makerspace. The makerspace will provide a home for the new equipment and the Student Technology Center will support the makerspace by staffing hours and providing workshops and training opportunities with the goal of increasing student access to equipment and improving the overall academic experience for all students. There will be a focus on supporting lower division students (first & second year), as these students often have very limited access to labs and equipment. This proposal has been discussed with and is supported by the Engineering and Design department chair, Jeffrey Newcomer.

The ENGD makerspace opened in fall of 2019 with the aim of supporting pre-major students by providing them with a space to work on projects, collaborate with their peers, and learn new skills. This space has proved to be an invaluable resource for engineering and design students however, due to financial limitations and time constraints, the makerspace does not have the necessary equipment or staffing to provide the desired level of access or training opportunities to students.

Funding this proposal would allow the ENGD Makerspace and Student Technology Center to leverage resources resulting in additional training opportunities for students, increased access to tools and equipment, creation of a more vibrate and diverse community of users, opportunity for collaboration among departments, and a potential model for future collaborations between the STC and other academic departments.

The Engineering and Design department will work closely with the STC over the course of approximately 1 year to complete this project. This will involve equipment installation, development of training resources, scheduling of open access times, and evaluation of the impact of the collaboration on the department, students, and the STC. If successful, the ENGD makerspace and the STC will continue the collaboration with the goal of expanding access to more students and increasing open access hours.

Sincerely,

Jill Davishahl (she|her|hers)
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