

THE HERALD

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Students Lose Printing Stipend, Gain Lower Printing Costs

Marlena Brown, news editor

New Meredith students entered this semester with some unexpected changes, as revisions to the budget that were voted on by the administration for the 2013-2014 school year went into effect this spring semester. Recent changes in campus funding have resulted in incoming freshman and transfer students no longer being allotted money for on campus printing services.

This change was not sudden, as it was once a part of Meredith's Technology Initiative Program, which granted new and current students a laptop computer. Receiving a new laptop unit during a student's junior year was a recent addition to the program. The program also included a printing stipend of \$10 a semester to use Meredith's printing facilities. According to SGA President Caitlyn DeBona, both of these incentives were closely tied together in a portion of the annual budget. Yet when the Laptop Initiative was discontinued, so was the printing stipend, which according to Jeff Howlett, Chief Information Officer, was a direct incentive from MTI. Now, new freshman, transfer and graduate students will receive a five dollar stipend for their first semester while supplementing printing costs on their own for the remainder of the school year. The change in the technology policy practically went unheard of, as students were not formally addressed about the matter.

Karen Brenneman, Director of Technological Resources, provided a response to shed some light on the situation. She explained that the annual printing stipend was originally supposed to be discontinued along with the Laptop Initiative, but the administrative committee did not feel this would be fair to

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incoming and current students. Brenneman stated that "It was supposed to be a gesture to help new students" and that the printing credit change was "not a change of policy, but a new policy."

Brenneman also explained that the committee had little choice, and wanted to go with the kinder alternative. Although five dollars is quite small, it was a better option for new students instead of providing no printing allowance. The committee also wanted current students to keep their printing credit since they were part of the initial laptop program. To compensate for the limited printing credit for students, the cost of printing was reduced, five cents per black and white copy and twenty cents for color copies (only in the copy center—at convenience copiers, they are still thirty five cents). This lowering of costs was directly related to a new contract being implemented this school year. She also explained that the substitute program for the Laptop Initiative is called BYOD, or Bring Your Own Device. The objective is to encourage students to bring their own devices, but not have to be totally dependent upon the institution for printing costs.

Jeff Howlett provided additional information, explaining that the printing stipend "came

about due to a student committee sponsored by the College Sustainability Coordinator on reducing the campus green print, which recommended the establishment of a campus wide print management system to replace the printers once given to all members of the laptop program." He also explained that the discontinuation of the laptop program has resulted in funding for other technology pursuits on campus, which he said "will provide greater impact to students," using examples of the recent fiber optic cable replacement and providing funding for online/hybrid courses.

The issue has been taken on by DeBona and her SGA coalition, as they work to revive the stipend portion of the budget for new students. She stated that "SGA has expressed concerns about the printing costs...a printing allowance should be provided to all undergraduate students."

DeBona also stated that SGA is working in hand with Howlett to ensure that all undergraduate students receive a \$10 printing stipend each semester. According to Howlett, this has been a work in progress since fall semester. Yet reception from Howlett has been positive, and as DeBona stated, a proposal for implementation of the original stipend policy is being brought forth in a future meeting: "Jeff Howlett has been very receptive... he has agreed to take our proposal for the printing allowances to be provided for all undergraduates to the budget meeting for next year."

Although DeBona explained that there are still many details being worked out, arrangements have been made for discussing the issue via proposal in mid-February or March. So while this issue has yet to reach a resolution, new and current students should prepare for ongoing changes on campus.

Good Academic Standing Required for Meredith Athletes

Julia Dent, managing editor

And so, the athletics' scandals at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill continue. UNC learning specialist, Mary Willingham, has come out with data proving academic fraud including no-show classes, grade changes and unsupervised independent study courses. Former football player Michael McAdoo has said that his counselors pushed him to sign up for four no-show and independent studies classes to boost his GPA. These frauds were mainly within the African and Afro-American Studies department, and department chairman Julius Nyang'oro, and his assistant Deborah Crowder are currently being investigated. According to the News and Observer, athletes make up only five percent of the college's population but account for almost 50 percent

of these academic dishonesties. UNC Provost, Jim Dean, says that because half of the students involved were not athletes, these classes and grade changes were not made as an athletic motive.

However, Willingham believes the athletes were the motivation behind the fraud because she has collected data on 183 academically challenged athletes since 2004 and reported that 60 percent read between a fourth and eighth grade reading level, 10 percent read below a third grade reading level and one student on the men's basketball team can't read or write at all. 85 percent of those athletes were on the men's football and basketball teams.

Meredith College takes steps to ensure academic honesty with its athletes. "We take several measures to ensure the staff and athletes

maintain integrity as representatives of Meredith College. The NCAA and the USA South Athletic Conference, our governing bodies, require several steps to ensure student athletes are in compliance before each season of participation," said Wendy Jones, the Assistant Athletic Director and Sports Information Director. Athletes have to be in "good academic standing with the college" in order to play, but Meredith doesn't require a minimum GPA. Steps are still taken to monitor athletes' academic progress and help those who are struggling with classes, and non-athletic violations are also monitored and athletes can be suspended from playing if the violation is extreme enough. "The athletic program strives to enhance individual development by promoting the following core values: integrity, discipline, respect and responsibility," said Jones.

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