Department Memorandum

From: Greg F. Burton
To: Faculty
Date: October 22, 2020
Room: C104B BNSN
Ext.: 2-4917

Re: Precision Machine Lab

Dear Colleagues,

For some time the Department has provided support for precision machining. This support has been in the form of paying for 50% of a full-time machinist’s salary (1040 hours). Last year, due to increased use of the PML, we agreed to temporarily raise our funding to 75% of a full-time machinist (1560 hours), but we have exceeded even this significant increase this year.

In a memo dated Dec 2009, Paul Farnsworth reminded us that we “should not use the shop to build anything that can be purchased off the shelf, even if it appears that it would save us money” because “in the long term it will cost all of us”. This philosophy is still true today and affects each of us. It is also important that projects that are part of commercial endeavors be charged to the appropriate accounts and not the Department’s.

Because the Department cannot further increase our funding of precision machining, it is necessary to put a cap on the amount of support we will provide. Starting immediately we are instituting the following changes for Department-funded PML support. We will support up to 200 hours of precision machining for a single faculty member. Charges in excess of the 200-hour cap must be paid from a faculty member’s account(s). Design hours are included and are billed as 3 design hours equating to 1 machinist hour. Supplies and special tools required for individual projects are not covered by the Department and therefore billed directly to the user.

We will once again require the use of a PML request form as was done previously that will require faculty and chair approval. This will allow us all to keep better track of anticipated expenses. The form is available on our website under the “Department Resources” tab and I have attached a copy to this letter. We will provide a monthly summary to each PML user so that current usage hours can be tracked.

I believe that the PML is a wonderful resource that provides quality machining at a very reasonable rate. I hope that the changes identified above will allow the Department to continue to provide support of this important resource.