

College-Owned Computer Damages Policy October 24, 2018

Background and Current Practice:

Computing equipment provided to College employees is governed by the [College Owned Computer Use Service Level Agreement](#) (July 21, 2017). In order to participate in the College's program, employees must sign an agreement to abide by the tenets of the Policy and to "accept responsibility for the care and safekeeping of equipment." Though this version of the Policy is relatively recent, the College has been providing computing equipment, under similar agreements, to College faculty and staff for over 20 years.

At issue is the paragraph: "You are responsible for the physical care of the computer. If repairs need to be performed due to negligence, accidents or user abuse (i.e., liquid spilled on keyboard, dropped notebooks or intentional damage), the repair service charge will not be covered by the manufacturer's warranty. You or your department will be responsible for the cost of repairs."

The manufacturer's warranty will typically cover equipment failure unless that failure is caused by the user. If the damage is not covered by the warranty, the cost for repair is then billed to the staff or faculty member's department. The College's leasing company employs a third-party partner to assess damages on returning equipment. They attempt to charge the College for minor damages that do not affect the operation of the equipment in addition to the major damages. The College works to have charges for minor damages excused. However, the cost of repair for more serious damages are billed back to the College.

Problem:

Departments are sometimes billed for minor damages to equipment, as well as for more serious damages not covered by a warranty. It is a challenge for departments and Information Services to cover these costs since budgets have been flat for some years. During the last academic year, some faculty and staff argued that neither they or their department should be required to cover assessments for not only the incidental damages, but for more serious, user inflicted, damages as well.

Policy:

The Office of the Dean of the Faculty (DoF) and Information Services (IS) will henceforth cover assessments for incidental damages up to \$125 per instance. Assessments for major damages not covered under warranty and exceeding \$125 will be billed back to the employee's department, as has been past practice.

Should a staff or faculty member believe that a damage assessment is unreasonable, he or she may make a written appeal to the IT Procurement and Asset Manager. Representatives from IS and the DoF will review and make a final determination.

Justification:

Incidental damages cannot be completely avoided so the College will cover assessments for such damages. However, the College continues to maintain that faculty and staff take personal responsibility for the safe handling and care of College equipment.

In 2018 the College moved from the “leasing model” of computer purchases to the “ownership model” as a cost saving measure. The College will continue to encourage responsible care of computing equipment as income from equipment resale will enable continuing the practice of automatically replacing aging equipment with new.

Approved by Information Services Committee, October 24, 2018