

# The VECTOR

The voice of the students of the New Jersey Institute of Technology

...With Magnitude and Direction

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## FRESHMEN TO RECEIVE COMPUTERS NEXT YEAR

### Tuition Increase Targeted For All To Provide Funding

Beginning next September, NJIT will provide all full time freshmen entering the Institute with their own microcomputer for personal and school use.

This represents what may possibly be the first instance of a public university anywhere in the nation requiring students to own their own computers. About a dozen or so private colleges, including Drew University and Stevens Tech, now require students to have their own machines.

While other schools require their students to buy the computers, usually at a discounted rate given by a computer company to the school, the Institute will buy the computers and give them to each freshman entering the school next fall.

"Computers are becoming an integral part of the curriculum throughout

the Institute," President Saul Fenster said. "As the state's technological university, we are continually extending and upgrading our distributive interactive computing environment, and the decision to provide freshmen with computers is one major element in that process."

In the past year, NJIT has added 7 VAX computers and more than 200 microcomputers and 100 terminals, and these will be substantially enhanced in the 1985-1986 academic year. Greater access will be provided through networking, or clustering, additional main and disc memory will be acquired, three higher speed printers and a laser printer will be networked to the VAX equipment, and higher speed tape drives will be provided. Priority access to these facilities will be

given to upper classmen.

The purchase of the machines, along with the overall upgrading of the system as a whole mentioned above, will be funded through a tuition and fee increase somewhere between \$200 and \$400. The increased charges, scheduled to take effect next fall, will apply to all of the Institute's 7,000 students at the school, although only fewer than 1,000 freshmen will receive the machines.

Fenster said that students not eligible to receive their own microcomputers will be able to take advantage of the "vast upgrading" of the computer capabilities of the Institute. "This is part of an overall program designed to enhance the computer capacity of New Jersey's only comprehensive science and technological university," He said the students would be required to use the computers as proficiently as they would hand held calculators. "We are not just talking about computer literacy at NJIT," Fenster said. "Our students must be computer proficient."

This action represents the first major test of a new state policy requiring all new public college students to have access to a microcomputer. The policy, not yet formally adopted, would seek the costs incurred by this action to be picked up by an expanded tuition aid pro-



The time spent waiting on long lines in Weston Hall's Computer Lab (above) will become a thing of the past next September as incoming freshmen will be required to have their own microcomputers.

gram. The initiative was discussed between Fenster and Edward T. Hollander, the state's higher education chancellor, and other state officials, but so far has not won a commitment from them that the state would pick up the tab for the new program.

Private colleges and universities have been able to take the lead in the area of requiring students to own their own computers because of their ability to borrow money against their endowments, thereby circumventing the red tape and complex funding structure encountered by public colleges. There are no readily available funds, beyond student tuition, for public colleges.

According to the plan, the students will keep the personal computers in their homes in order to perform their academic work. All of their work

will be recorded on the machines own floppy disk, which will be brought to school for work there.

The students will not actually own the computers until they graduate. At that time, Fenster said, the students will be required to pay a "nominal" fee and then will be allowed to keep their microcomputers. "We want to emphasize the nominal nature of that fee," he said. "It will be very small."

"We believe it is very important that the students understand the computers will be theirs when they graduate," Fenster said. "We think it will be an incentive to keep good care of them while they are in the student's possession."

Fenster also noted that no decision can be made yet as to the manufacturer who will supply the microcomputers to the school.



According to the new plan, freshmen will do a majority of work at home on their personal computer, but will be required to bring the floppy disk in to the Institute.

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