Senior Design Toolkit [1]

The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (Texas ECE) has assembled a toolkit for industry sponsors who wish to secure the IP from the student design project(s) that they sponsor or may want the student team to access proprietary tools or information in the course of their project. The Senior Design Toolkit is designed to help companies initiate documentation that applies to the company needs before a project commences.

Document Guidelines:

- Companies must initiate proper documentation, as it is not the responsibility of The University of Texas at Austin.
- The University of Texas at Austin's standard IP agreements may not be changed or amended under any certain circumstances.
- All documents and requirements must be submitted on the project proposal form prior to project commencement.

Senior Design Agreements/IP

The University of Texas Office Of Legal Affairs, as directed by the University of Texas System Board of Regents, has issued a standard IP agreement for all senior capstone projects across the Cockrell School of Engineering. The agreement is between the University and the company and is in accordance with state and federal laws and, as such, cannot be amended nor customized by the company.

The Texas Board of Regents’ rules assign ownership of students’ coursework-generated intellectual property to the students, and a company can request that the students sign agreements granting this IP to the company. The student IP agreements are executed between students and the company with acknowledgement by the course faculty. If such an agreement is required, this should be noted in the original project proposal submission so that the students can make informed decisions about the projects they would like to work on.

These two agreements are required ONLY if the company sponsor wants to secure student IP rights from the project, and are not required if only individual NDA agreements are desired.

- Texas ECE Senior Capstone Design Course Sponsor Project Agreement [2]
- Texas ECE Senior Capstone Design Course Special Intellectual Property Assignment For Students [3]

Proprietary Information/NDA

As part of their course grading requirements, students give oral and written reports of their
work, including a public showcase of their project at Open House. In some cases, companies provide licenses or access to proprietary tools, data, or devices that need to be utilized in projects. Sponsoring companies may ask students to sign NDAs or license agreements as individuals apart from The University. If such an agreement is required, this should be noted in the original project proposal submission so that the students can make informed decisions about the projects to work on.

Faculty mentors, teaching assistants, and other teaching staff generally do not sign NDAs and would not be involved in the use of or access to proprietary information or data. Their role is to guide students through the process of developing designs and prototypes, and grade students based on their project work and reports. As a result, the NDA covered materials should not be of a nature that precludes the team reporting project design details and outcomes.

If you are interested in initiating a project please fill out the Senior Design Project Proposal Form [4], or to discuss the program further, contact Jennifer Campbell [5] (Senior Program Coordinator). Upon agreement of the project proposal, a supervising faculty member will work with each company to submit the necessary materials and launch the project.

To view examples of past project proposals, refer to Senior Design Project Descriptions [6].