ACUTA Elects New Board of Directors

Each year at the close of the Annual Conference, ACUTA welcomes a new Board of Directors. On July 31, President-Elect Walter Czerniak, Northern Illinois University, will step into the presidency for 2003-2004.

As a result of last month's election, former Director-at-Large Tamara Closs of Georgetown University will assume the position of President-Elect. She will serve on the Board for the following two years as President and Immediate Past President.

Carmine Piscopo of Providence College will accept responsibilities as Secretary/Treasurer.

President Jeanne Jansenius, University of the South, will continue to serve on the Board as Immediate Past President.

Former Secretary/Treasurer John Bradley, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Corinne Hoch of Columbia University were elected to serve as Directors-at-Large.

Dave Barta, University of Oregon, and Mary L. Pretz-Lawson, Carnegie-Mellon University, will serve the second of their two-year terms as Directors-at-Large.

The Board-appointed Director-at-Large for the coming year is Wendell Barbour of California State University at Bakersfield.

"I am very pleased that Carmine and Corinne will be joining the board. Both have served ACUTA well in committee work over the years, and they will complement the other returning members. We welcome Wendell, as well, and look forward to working with him," states Czerniak. "It will be an honor for me to follow in the footsteps of previous presidents and continue to work to keep ACUTA the great organization it is."

Serving on the Board requires a serious commitment of time and energy. Those who are willing to serve are to be commended. If this kind of leadership role is of interest to you, contact any Board member or Executive Director Jeri Semer about how you can get involved.

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Congratulations to Milestone Members

M. Lewis Temares
Terry Wallace
Ian Welter
Gary E. Wenger

20 Years
Joseph R. Brown
Coleman H. Burton
Susan J. Fisher
Gary W. Keego
Patricia A. Nelson
Walter Ronaghan

Paul J. Ryan
Donald R. Salier
Kenneth J. Soper
Maureen D. Trimm
Diane R. Winkler

15 Years
Jeff Aagaard, Jr.
Craig Beal
Phillip W. Beldeman
William D. Blohmgren
Paul Bolz
John Bradley
William A. Brigha
Richard D. Bult
Randi Burns
Jeri L. Canard
Timothy J. Casey
Joel A. Cohen
James S. Cross, Ph.D.
Larry L. Davis
Vicky R. Doer
David A. Douglass
Bill Duggan
Pamela Fiedsko
Roy A. Graver
Thomas M. Heacock
Whitney L. Johnson
Tim Kilpatrick
Riny Ledgerwood
D. Scott Mah
Carol H. Martin
Joseph T. Massey, Jr.
David Moengenberg
John W. Hannally
David E. O'Neill
Barbara Patrick
William A. Phillips
Phillip Pickle

Richard Naugle
Richard N. Rose
J.C. Ruch
Dianne Schmitt
Kenneth R. Schuetz
Jane Sheldon
Francis W. Speck
Terrence L. Straton

ACommunity Executive Director

From ACATA Headquarters

On behalf of the association, I am pleased to recognize the following individuals who have been ACATA members for a number of years. We congratulate you and we appreciate your contribution to the association.

If you expected to see your name on this list and do not, please contact Kellie Bowman at kbowman@acata.org.

20 Years
Joseph R. Brown
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Gary W. Keego
Patricia A. Nelson
Walter Ronaghan

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Kenneth R. Schuetz
Jane Sheldon
Francis W. Speck
Terrence L. Straton
This month's topic is InfiniBand, a term you might have encountered in a chance contact with the IT hermits, those guys who rarely come out of that intimidating room with all the expensive computer equipment. Maybe your first thought when you heard it was "InfiniBand weren't they big in the 70s?" But no, that was some other Disco Era group.

InfiniBand is actually an interconnect technology for moving data between processors and input/output (I/O) devices, such as storage devices or storage area networks. It has many similarities to the old channel-based mainframe computing model, but is designed to meet the rigorous performance and fault tolerance requirements of today's server-heavy data center.

The first version of the InfiniBand specification was completed in October 2000, and a large number of companies have introduced products or announced support.

An advantage of InfiniBand is its ability to support tens of thousands of nodes in a single subnetwork, as well as numerous subnetworks. Its robust architecture handles huge numbers of simultaneous transactions, which is why InfiniBand can deal with server clustering so well.

By providing standard high-speed, low-latency interconnections among vast numbers of servers, it enables the clustering and management of multiple servers as one entity, so performance is scaled by adding boxes, without the complexities of traditional clustering.

InfiniBand operates in place of, as well as complementary to, the PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) bus, the dominant shared bus architecture in high-end servers and PCs. Rather than send data in parallel, as PCI does, InfiniBand transmits data serially at 2.5 or 10 Gbps or higher, multiplexing it over several channels.

With servers starting to hit the capacity limits of the shared bus architecture, InfiniBand breaks the "glass ceiling" limitations thanks to its serial, switched fabric architecture. Its dedicated link point-to-point design provides the full capacity of the connection to each end point. This eliminates the delays that result from contention for the bus. With many paths for data routing, InfiniBand also increases reliability and system availability and makes fault isolation and troubleshooting easier, since problems can be isolated to a single connection.

Another advantage to InfiniBand is that it beefs up system density by enabling power, Ethernet, and other functionality to be taken out of the server box itself and shared by many rack-mounted smaller servers or "server blades." PCI, for instance, could operate inside the server, with InfiniBand as the backplane. Result: independent scaling of processing and I/O capacity, creating more flexibility for data center managers.

InfiniBand fabrics consist of four main components: switches, routers, and host and target channel adapters. The adapters generate and decode packets, handle memory translation and protection, and validate access rights, interfacing with the servers and with storage, fibre channel networks, and other I/O nodes. A channel adapter can have multiple ports, each of which is linked to an InfiniBand switch, with any port in the switch fabric able to talk to any other port. The adapters have their own intelligence, so they can offload communications processing from the server operating system and CPU.

InfiniBand also has a role in supercomputing. Late last year the Los Alamos National Laboratory launched a supercomputer consisting of 128 computers interconnected by InfiniBand.

One challenge for InfiniBand is that it is a new architecture, and organizations with tight IT budgets (know any like that?) may be reluctant to move to something unfamiliar. Also, alternative technologies and approaches are improving in speed and performance, lessening the urgency for a major change.

You can find out more about InfiniBand from the InfiniBand Trade Association (www.infinibandta.org), which has some 100 member companies and is dedicated to advancing the technology.

As always, if there are specific topics you would like to see covered in this space, please let me know via e-mail at kevin@duxpr.com.
Community College Uses Bundled Communications Technology to Leverage IT Resources

by Christine J. Holley
Interactive Intelligence, Inc.

Founded in 1965, Northern Virginia Community College (www.nvcc.edu) is the largest institution of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the second-largest multi-campus community college in the nation.

In 1997, the college decided to create an information technology help desk to improve its service to students and staff. The main college campus was using basic Centrex services. Centrex had provided the college’s financial aid department with basic hunt-group routing, but it had no mechanism for tracking call statistics, nor did it offer advanced features such as interactive voice response, e-mail routing, and remote support.

The college decided to seek a fuller featured communications system that would enable a small number of agents to handle a large volume of calls through improved automation and more efficient call handling. Due to budgetary restraints, the college also needed a system that could be designed, installed, and maintained in-house.

“We had only one engineer dedicated to phone-system support,” says Lowell Ballard, director of IT support services for Northern Virginia Community College. “Since getting approval for a new full-time position was not likely, we decided to look for a VoIP-compatible solution that could be supported using our much larger staff of network engineers.”

Ballard and his associates began reviewing communications systems, but he was concerned about maintenance and administrative issues with the fuller featured options.

“Many of the vendors we reviewed offered solutions based on applications they had incorporated either through an acquisition or an OEM agreement,” Ballard explains. “This meant dealing with multiple vendors and a ‘balkanized’ architecture that required numerous servers for all the different applications.”

After expanding its search, the college discovered a new technology called bundled communications application suites. This technology was based on an open, centralized communications server on which a variety of applications could run.

“We ultimately selected a bundled communications solution because it required fewer devices to perform the same functions compared with best-of-breed systems,” Ballard says. “In addition, since it was built as a separate applications layer, we could also run it on our choice of switching network—including VoIP.”

The college installed a bundled communications application suite from Interactive Intelligence (www.inin.com) in 1997, along with products from Cisco (www.cisco.com) for VoIP and voice mail. Today, the applications suite supports the college’s five part-time IT help-desk employees and four full-time financial-aid call-center agents, providing them with built-in soft phone for call control and presence management, ACD, IVR, and reporting. These staff members field calls from approximately 40,000 students and 2,000 employees across the college’s five campuses.

Ballard says that the new system has helped the college to reduce staffing costs while maintaining high levels of customer service.

“We can now field calls on Saturdays without on-site staff by programming the system to send calls to an employee’s remote cell phone where changes can be made through Microsoft’s Terminal Services,” Ballard says. “We can also remotely record and publish new IVR prompts to inform callers of after-hour network problems and to update the network status Web page by phone.”

In recommending that colleges consider a bundled communications application suite in lieu of traditional systems, Ballard explains, “Most colleges operate on limited resources. A bundled communications application suite maximizes these resources by providing an easy-to-manage, easy-to-customize system ideal for a campus environment.”
Want to Be More Involved in ACUTA?
Be a State/Province Coordinator!

by Harvey "Buck" Buchanan
Florida State University
Chair, ACUTA Membership Committee

These States Need Coordinators!
Alaska Nevada
Connecticut New Jersey
Delaware New Mexico
Massachusetts Pennsylvania
Michigan Virginia
Nebraska Wyoming

The Membership Committee is looking for Coordinators for the states/provinces listed at the left. (If your state already has a Coordinator, perhaps you would be interested in filling a vacancy for a nearby area.)

Being a Coordinator is an easy way to participate in the association and reap personal benefits without a major time commitment. State/Province Coordinators serve as a central contact for members and nonmembers in their area. This helps ACUTA know what’s happening at schools or what hot issues need to be addressed. We especially need help finding the names of your colleagues at nonmember schools so we can invite them to be a part of the growing network.

One of the principal benefits to you is the additional networking and the opportunity to increase your circle of contacts. In addition, accepting a position of responsibility in your professional organization is viewed favorably by senior administrators within college/university environments. The increased visibility for your school is also of interest to most administrators. And if you have ever thought of serving as a committee chair or on ACUTA’s board of directors, this could certainly be a step in that direction.

The State/Province Coordinator plays a significant role in how ACUTA relates to both members and nonmembers on an individual basis. Networking has helped ACUTA become the single voice of communications technology in higher education.

There are clear advantages for both you and the association for just a small investment of time on your part. As a volunteer-driven organization, we rely on members to support our goal of helping university communications technology professionals contribute to the achievement of their institution’s mission.

If you have any questions, please contact me at Florida State University (850/644-3444) or Kellie Bowman, ACUTA Membership Development Manager at 859/278-3338 x222 or kbowman@acuta.org. Consider becoming more involved in your professional association!

Board Report
July

The ACUTA Board of Directors met via conference call June 5, 2003. Following are highlights of that meeting.

The Board discussed and approved the proposed site for the Winter Seminar 2005: January 30 – February 2 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The Board also approved the proposed location of the Spring Seminar 2005: April 3-6 at the Wyndham Philadelphia at Franklin Plaza, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Trimm reported that the Institutional Excellence Award had been granted to George Washington University, and an Honorable Mention to Northwestern University, both in the large school category. In addition, the committee has decided not to grant the ACUTA Ruth A. Michalecki Leadership Award this year.

Ms. Semer reported the results of the 2003 election:
President-Elect: Tamara Closs
Secretary/Treasurer: Carmine Piscopo
Directors at Large: John Bradley, Corinne Hoch

Ms. Sefer reported that Amy Burton has been promoted to Manager of Corporate Relations and Marketing. The Board congratulated Ms. Burton on her accomplishments.

Respectfully submitted,
John Bradley
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
ACUTA Secretary/Treasurer

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Cell phone Quality-of-Service

The FCC reports annually on competition in the commercial mobile radio service (CMRS) market, and the General Accounting Office (GAO) has suggested that an evaluation of call quality should be included in the report. The GAO report that was released May 5th included the following.

"Collecting and analyzing information on call quality would provide an ongoing record to help determine whether the current regulatory framework for call quality is adequate or whether certain actions — such as establishing call quality standards, mandating additional consumer information, or reducing local government control over the siting of new base stations — are needed." (Telecommunications Reports 5/15/03)

A bill currently before the House (HB1642) will, if passed into law, require the FCC to monitor complaints regarding the quality of mobile phone service. A similar bill was introduced two years ago, but it did not move through the House. A bill has also been introduced in the Senate mandating the FCC to monitor wireless carriers’ service quality and make the information available to consumers. The bill also would mandate that consumers have access to high-resolution maps that detail call-quality variations across providers’ service areas. This is interesting because last year the FCC told the providers that they no longer had to provide service area maps.

FCC Chairman Powell has indicated to the GAO that the FCC would include call quality information in future reports by the CMRS to the extent that they are possible. Powell has agreed with the GAO that the needed data is not currently available and that for such issues the data is difficult to identify and categorize. (TR 5/15/03)

Decline in LD Revenues

The FCC has data indicating that the revenues for the provision of long-distance services dropped in 2001 to $90 billion from $110 billion in 2000. They also noted that the average consumer payment/minute for toll service also continues to decline, falling to 8 cents/minute in 2001 from 9 cents/minute in 2000. International revenue fell from 52 cents/minute in 2000 to 35 cents/minute in 2001.

The long-distance market share for AT&T fell to 38% in 2001. WorldCom had a 24% share, and Sprint 9%. The Bell companies had a 6% share in 2001. The remaining 24% was held by more than 1,000 other long-distance carriers. (TR 6/1/03)

Cell Phone Use on Aircraft

The FCC is looking into the possibility of removing or modifying its ban on the use of a cell phone while aboard a commercial airliner. A notice of proposed rulemaking on this issue was released on April 28th. The notice also indicated that there was only one company, Verizon Airfone, Inc., that can currently operate air-to-ground phone service aboard commercial aircraft. We have all seen the phones mounted in the back of the seat in front of where we were sitting on the plane. The prices run $3.99 a minute plus a $3.99 connection charge.

The Commission is also considering the possibility of modifying or eliminating a number of the public mobile-service rules that have become obsolete as the result of technology change, increased competition in the CMRS, supervening changes to related Commission rules, or a combination of these factors.

The FCC will also be working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to be sure that there is no conflict between the cell phone and

continued on page 7
the wireless devices on the plane. An option may be that an airline passenger might be able to rely on his or her CMRS handset to send and receive data or voice communications, at low power, to a special transceiver located on the airplane itself. This transceiver then could communicate with terrestrial locations. (TR 5/15/03)

I may be wrong, but I seem to recall that there were cell phone calls made from the hijacked planes on 9/11/01. These calls provided very important information to the FBI and others.

PSAPs Should Register Phone Lines

The FCC and the National Communication System (NCS) have launched an initiative to persuade the nation’s approximately 7,500 public safety answering points (PSAPs) to register with a program designed to facilitate the rapid restoration of key phone lines during emergencies.

The Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) program was a part of the FCC and administered by the NCS when it was created in 1988. The NCS, along with TSP, is now at the Department of Homeland Security. TSP is registering the PSAPs’ phone lines for protection in case of an emergency.

If the Public Safety Department on your campus is serving as the campus PSAP, you might ask if they know about this registration program. Unfortunately, TR did not list the address or phone number to call to register. They may be able to find out by contacting other PSAPs. As of May 15, only 10% of the nation’s PSAPs had registered. (TR 5/15/03)

Travel by FCC Officials

A nonprofit organization, Center for Public Integrity, has reported that during the past 8 years industry trade groups have spent about $2.8 million on trips taken by FCC officials. (That’s $800,000 more than the FCC spent itself.) Some of the groups that subsidized travel include: National Association of Broadcasters ($191,472); National Cable and Telecommunications Association ($172,636); Consumer Electronics Manufacturing Association ($149,285); Institute for International Research ($112,849); and California Cable & Telecommunications Association ($108,242).

That’s only the top five groups.

Which Commissioners are doing this travel? That would be: Chairman Powell, 44 trips costing $84,921; Abernathy, 14 ($16,184); Copps, 14 ($15,409); Martin, 12 ($14,856); and Adelstein, 3 ($2,998). The most frequent destinations were Las Vegas, New Orleans, and New York. (TR 6/1/03)

USF Funding Base

Six members of the federal-state joint board on universal services are recommending that the FCC “broaden the contribution base of the Universal Service Fund to include intrastate revenues.” Such a change may require the implementation of legislation by Congress. State board members are not in favor of the new methods under consideration that may change the way the funds are collected. They do not like the idea of a system based on end-user connections or telephone numbers. The state board members have indicated that the revenue base “should be expanded to cover all or nearly all forms of telecommunications.” (TR 6/1/03)

On May 1 the first wave of e-rate funding for 2003 was released. This group of 14,000 applicants, about one third of the total, will receive a total of $181 million in funding for priority one service classified as telecommunications services and Internet access.

The total e-rate funds requested for this year is $4.718 billion, of which about $1.745 billion is for priority-one services. The total funds available for the year will be about $2.25 billion. "Funding for priority-one services—internal connections—will be issued in future waves when it is determined at what discount level they will be funded," USAC said. (TR 5/15/03)
Welcome New Members

Associate Member
Internet2, Ann Arbor, MI ........................................... www.internet2.edu
Benjamin Teitelbaum, Program Manager, Voice and Integrated Comm., 734/352-7031

Corporate Affiliate Members

Copper Members

Broadband Development 3 LLC, Park Ridge, IL
Alan Kraus, President, 847/384-7373 ........................................... www.BBD3.com

Ericsson, Inc., Plano, TX
Jennifer Johnsrud, Director, 972/583-2001 ........................................... www.ericsson.com

Integrisys Communications, Portsmouth, NH
Dennis G. Dinsmore, President, 603/431-8155 ................. www.integisysgroup.com
Integrisys engineers, installs, and supports campus LAN infrastructures for voice, data, video, IP-based CCTV surveillance systems, distributed antenna systems for 802.11a/b wireless, PCS, and cellular communications, and is an Interactive Intelligence VAR with applications for IP PBX and SIP-enabled IP telephony on a single platform.

Vernier Networks, Mt. View, CA
Mary E. Ruberry, VP Marketing, 650/237-2211 ................. www.verniernetworks.com
Vernier Networks, Inc., is a leading provider of secure managed access for wireless LANS. Vernier offers the award-winning Vernier Networks System, a scalable solution designed for secure mobility, and supports thousands of users roaming the network.

Are you ready to take your involvement with ACUTA to a new level? Can you invest one or two hours per month for the next year or two in behind-the-scenes ACUTA activities? Are you interested in the publications program that oversees the e-News and the ACUTA Journal and makes decisions about other potential publishing opportunities for the association?

If you answered yes to these questions, the Publications Committee wants to hear from you!

Serving on the Publications Committee is a moderate-level commitment. We usually meet for no more than an hour once a month by conference call to discuss Journal content including determining the focus of upcoming issues and the candidates for interviews. We discuss how the publications could better meet the members’ needs, and consider suggestions for new publications.

If you would be interested in learning more, just contact Jim Cross, Chair, at jcross@mtu.edu or Pat Scott, ACUTA Communications Manager, at pscott@acuta.org.

We need a few good volunteers. Remember, volunteering adds value to your membership!