ACUTA eNews November 1997, Vol. 26, No. 11
Second Annual ACUTA Student Paper Competition

At the opening ceremonies of the 26th Annual Conference last July, winners of ACUTA's first annual Student Paper Awards competition were introduced, culminating months of efforts behind the scenes on the part of an eight-member task force and dozens of students from schools across the country. As winners of this competition, these three individuals received cash prizes and all-expenses-paid trips to Atlanta to participate in their first ACUTA event.

Now it's time to begin the process again, and make this opportunity available to other students who are considering a career in campus telecommunications.

Most of the rules will remain the same. Entries must be the work of students enrolled in a degree-granting program with a component of telecommunications in their degree plan. The topic must be relevant to campus telecommunications.

Leading the Student Papers task force this year is ACUTA President-Elect, Buck Bayliff. The competition will be sponsored again this year by Telesoft Corp. Information will be mailed to primary representatives at all member campuses within the next few weeks. If you work with students who might be interested in entering this competition, encourage them to begin planning their entry.

SLCC Telecom Bails Out

Jack Canavera
St. Louis Comm. College

St. Louis Community College is a public metropolitan community college that serves the St. Louis area. We have three major campus locations and a downtown administrative center. Each location is served by a Nortel PBX and is networked via dark fiber.

On Thursday afternoon, Oct. 23, our Forest Park Campus experienced a break in an eight-inch water main, located just outside the main campus building. The water broke through the foundation wall, sending debris through and flooding the two lower basement levels of the campus. St. Louis City fire department sent the equivalent of a three-alarm contingent of pumper trucks to control the rising water. Unfortunately, the main valve feeding the line was buried under three inches of asphalt in the road outside the campus. The water was not shut off until 8:30 that evening. During that time, the water continued to rise.

In its wake, our switch room took in about five feet of water. Of course, the switch, fiber laser, and other power equipment was lost. Various other college-wide components—HVAC, heating controls, electrical systems for the campus—were either damaged or destroyed.
Board Report
October, 1997

The Board met Oct. 18 in Albuquerque prior to the Fall Seminar. In addition to a discussion of Strategic Planning Action Items from the Sept. meeting, the following items were discussed:

• Improvements to ACUTA’s Conference Web page
• Proposed ‘97-’98 goals from the Executive Director
• Changes to head table arrangements at the annual conference
• Approval of monthly financial reports through Sept. ‘97
• Reports from committee liaisons from Leg./Reg., Marketing, Membership, Program, Vendor Liaison committees and the Student Paper Competition Task Force
• Approval of new members for Membership & Program committees, and Student Paper Task Force

The Board will continue to review and finalize the Goals and Objectives in support of the strategic plan in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Mordosky, Bradley University
ACUTA Secretary/Treasurer

SLCC
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Thankfully our local telecommunications vendor, Southwestern Bell, and our switch vendor, GTE, pulled out the stops in getting us back in service. We expected a temporary switch within three days, and a new main system delivered from Nortel by the end of the week. Obviously we had work to do on the switch room which could delay installation of the new permanent switch. Southwestern Bell provided same day installation of temporary 1FB circuits for local communication needs at our command post.

We planned to open for limited classes and services by the following Monday. We figured damage to the fiber optics would be the most time-consuming to repair. My immediate challenge was to get voice services back followed by temporary data. The fiber restoration would be last on the list.

My background has been in the banking arena for the last 25 years, so disasterrecovery is something I’m used to, although this is the first time I have ever encountered an actual full-fledged disaster.

Once we have recovered, we will gladly answer questions or share lessons learned.

Reach Jack via e-mail at jcanaver@cc.slcc.cc.mo.us

President’s Column
Continued from page 1

center, student enrollment department, or any of the student “clubs” that fit your campus environment, as well as your local high schools...Volunteer!

What a segue. My true theme for this article is volunteer protocol and etiquette. (You knew I had an ulterior motive, didn’t you?) Here are some suggestions for making your contribution as a volunteer more meaningful.

1. Verbally volunteering to “do anything” is like saying “come over for dinner anytime.” Communicating in writing your talents, strengths, and even your expectations about what you hope to gain from the experience will ensure a more productive relationship.

2. When you accept or get elected to a volunteer position, give it the same priority as your paying job, maintain a professional demeanor in how you look and behave, avoid politics and needless controversy, and always speak well of the organization and the people.

3. Be willing to learn, to accept guidance, to work as a team member, and don’t try to take over. Creative ideas and changes in traditions may be introduced more successfully using such phrases such as “have we tried this before,” “would others find this interesting,” or “perhaps we could experiment.”

4. Understand your term of commitment for the position, honor it to the end, and know when to leave. Unless you are invited to mentor the new person, the next volunteer must be able to assume responsibility quickly in order to become effective and feel valued. If you desire to continue serving the organization, develop relationships prior to the expiration of your term that will meet both your and the organization’s needs.

5. While achieving the work of the organization requires serious effort, remember to mix with the members and have fun also. Networking both formally and socially will benefit you, your career, and your organization.

Now, will someone out there let me know if I forget to walk my talk on any of this? Thanks!

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATORS

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Negotiating a Wireless Contract

Wireless technology is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the communications system on campuses worldwide. If you expect to be negotiating a contract for wireless service, you might be interested in an article which appeared in the September 1, 1997 issue of 411 Newsletter. The article was built around seven-point protection against getting burned and included some useful tips, condensed here with permission:

1. Get a grip. Before you sit down with a carrier, crunch the numbers. Figure out exactly how many users you have, how much airtime they will average, and what type of users they will be. Fit your deal around these factors.

2. Know their game. First, remember the unit isn't the sale, airtime is. Wireless companies are different than landline telcos. They have different goals at the negotiating table. Don't be distracted by talk about all the different handsets, accessories, etc. Work first for the best per-minute deal you can get.

3. Get a corporate-sponsored deal. Wireless carriers work with two major types of contracts, corporate-sponsored and individual-sponsored. If the company foots the bill, it may be tempting to let [employee] users enter individual contracts and have the carrier do all the maintenance, billing, and the like. But you will get a better deal if it is corporate-sponsored.

4. Term commitments can be your friend. One of the biggest problems wireless companies face is churn. A recent report from Arthur Andersen puts the number at 30%. Wireless companies will work to keep customers.

If you can tell them you're willing to agree to a significant contract term, you will make these people very happy. Per-minute rates are inversely proportional to contract terms. You will get the best deal with a longer term.

5. Bundle up, it's rough out there. There is a boatload of wireless companies out there, looking for your business. Although many smaller companies will try to woo you with lower prices to get you away from the big guys, remember you may be able to bundle wireless service with other landline services to save some money. Ask your IXC.

6. Fixed prices aren't so fixed. There are some charges the wireless carrier has to levy, according to law, such as taxes. Others can be brought down by a savvy negotiator, including penalties, activation fees, and access charges.

7. To PCS or not to PCS. Personal Communications Services technology is making leaps and bounds in the wireless market. This digital method of wireless transmission claims better voice quality, improved features, and a lower price. But look before you leap.

The PCS footprints in the U.S. have not been built out as far as the traditional analog systems have. Also remember that PCS is a general term for next generation digital wireless services. There are several PCS standards floating around that don't jibe.

Your best bet is to stick with an analog carrier for the time being. Eventually, one of the new digital technologies will emerge as the de facto standard. In the meantime, go with a carrier with a big footprint and the itch to get into digital services (or one that's already offering digital). Then, you can easily upgrade when the time comes. Some handset manufacturers already make dual mode phones that will switch between digital and analog systems.

Look for more information in the months ahead to assist you in evaluating the potential of wireless technologies to meet the needs of your campus. Our thanks to 411 Newsletter for their permission to use the information contained in this article. 411 Newsletter is published by CCMI. For information about subscribing to this biweekly publication, call 888/287-2223.

Seminar Looks at Networks, Legislative & Regulatory Issues

ACUTA's Winter Seminar in Tempe, Arizona, will address two very critical issues.

Little happens on a campus that does not involve the network—from the simplest phone call to biotech research. According to Jim Cross, "The Managing and Monitoring Network Activity track at ACUTA's Winter Seminar will highlight key features, capabilities, and requirements of enterprise network management systems. We'll discuss what it will take for the college and university marketplace to embrace, deploy, and realize the benefits of the new generation of enterprise network management systems."

Few campuses have fully integrated their voice, video, and data, but several developments have renewed interest in using a common transport and enterprise network management mechanism, according to Cross. Also, industry has embraced the universal serial bus, a new physical interface for connection of telephones to PCs.

Track I of ACUTA's Seminar will provide members with an opportunity to explore new management solutions that are in the development and testing stages and to hear how other telecom managers are struggling with ways to manage and monitor network activity on their campuses.

Track II will provide an update of legislative and regulatory issues. See Jeri Semer's Executive Director's column for more information about this seminar, or access ACUTA's Web site at www.acuta.org. Complete details will be furnished in the brochure which will be mailed soon.
Is There a Back Door to Your Long Distance?

Diane Winkler
Union College

Has Intra-LATA directory assistance compromised the integrity of your long distance charges? Here's what we recently discovered at Union College. Someone with an authorization code dials 555-1212 using Bell Atlantic (NYNEX) and requests a listing. After getting the number requested via auto attendant, the dialer is told the call can be completed for a 75¢ charge by dialing 1 or saying yes. The caller follows the instructions and is connected to the requested destination automatically.

In checking call rating files on our telemangement system, we could see the call to 555-1212 and the 75¢ directory assistance charge. There were no call records indicating the caller had connected to a chargeable toll number nor that he/she could have talked at length, since the call was placed by the LEC and not dialed out from the college's PBX. So the cost to the caller for the entire call would only have been the DA charge, while the cost to the college, billed by the LEC, will be for the total cost of the call start to finish. The chances of identifying and "backbilling" the caller for that toll call will be difficult if not impossible depending on how the LEC bills the call to the college. Note that the DA Call Blocking outside the LATA was blocked (being handled by our long distance vendor, AT&T).

We should note that we DID have Billed Number Screening and Call Blocking Completion in place with NYNEX. With our upgrade to a new PBX, installation of (incoming only) PRI lines, and the acquisition of NYNEX by Bell Atlantic, our screening codes were apparently deleted (even though Bell Atlantic denies this). We believe we have now corrected this problem.

Not only have we put the Call Blocking Completion on our DIDs but on all of our outgoing trunks and Local Operator Assisted Calls (If you let your callers dial "0" and be transferred to DA, you need to make sure this avenue is blocked as well).

This month's column is being filed from the ACUTA Fall Seminar in beautiful Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is the largest Fall Seminar in three years; nearly 275 members and exhibitors have gathered to learn about the latest developments in Campus Card issues and Applications, Strategic Planning and Team Management.

Planning is well underway for the Winter, 1998 ACUTA Seminar in Tempe, AZ, scheduled for January 11-14. We are expecting record crowds, as the speakers address hot topics affecting all colleges and universities: "Legislative and Regulatory Issues," and "Managing and Monitoring Network Activity."

None of us can afford to be ignorant of the far-reaching implications of legislation and regulations that have been adopted within the last year. New regulatory actions and court decisions seem to be coming on a weekly basis. The Winter Seminar speakers will include noted telecommunications attorneys, public policy makers, and ACUTA members who have worked successfully with their state regulatory agencies. They will cover all of the key regulatory issues you need to know about to remain in compliance, discern new options, and better understand vendor offerings.

The Managing and Monitoring Network Activity track will focus on the demands of a network environment that integrates voice, data, and video. Traditional "call accounting" software is no longer sufficient to manage and monitor the performance of integrated networks. Presenters for the seminar will include ACUTA members who are implementing integrated network software, and several new-to-ACUTA vendors in this leading edge area. A unique feature of the seminar will be sessions in which institutional members can communicate their needs to vendors who are currently developing products for the college and university market.

I hope that we will see you at the Winter Seminar, and that it will be a beneficial educational experience for all who attend.

On another note, at our press date we are still awaiting word from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on the petition filed by the American Council on Education (ACE), ACUTA, and several other higher education associations. The petition asks the FCC to clarify its rules to specify that colleges and universities are not intended to be required to contribute a portion of their telecommunications revenues to the Universal Service Fund. The decision on this petition may be affected by the fact that four new Commissioners are up for Senate confirmation. As soon as a decision is reached, we will inform all ACUTA members.

On behalf of the ACUTA staff, we wish all of our members a Happy Thanksgiving.

The moral to the story is to regularly check your screening/blocking flags that are in place. They can change w/o you knowing about it.

Contact Diane via e-mail at: winklerd@alice.union.edu
**Slamming**

In the past, "Slamming" meant changing the long distance carrier without proper authorization. 411 notes that slamming is now showing up in other services. At least two local exchange carriers (LECs) have complained to the FCC about slamming of local service, and have asked for tougher penalties.

A company in Oklahoma found that local service had been switched and complained to the LEC, reports 411. When the LEC researched the problem they found that the service "was accidentally switched through a clerical error at the telco." ACUTA members should be sure that someone is carefully monitoring phone bills to catch any slamming of the University telephone system.

**Toll-free Numbers**

Telecommunications Reports (TR, 9/22/97) notes that the toll-free number range is being rapidly used up. At the current rate the 888 series will run out before the 877 series is scheduled to become active on 4/4/98. A number conservation plan is being considered. The next access code being considered is 866.

**Calling-Party Pays**

As we've noted before, some cellular phone companies are working on a system where the person making a call to a cellular phone, not the owner of the cellular phone, may have to pay for the call. TR (9/29/97) reports that as of 9/25 companies in 17 states already offer the service. The FCC is seeking comments on how the caller should be alerted that he or she will be paying the cellular charges for the call if it is completed. They also want input as to whether calling-party-pays will enhance local exchange competition. Members should look carefully at this issue. If these charges cannot be traced to the calling party, it may be necessary to try blocking such calls or require them to involve the campus operator.

**FCC Commissioners**

Four new commissioners have been approved by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and recommended to the full Senate for confirmation. The floor vote in the Senate is expected before the planned November 7th adjournment for the year.

Two main concerns showed up in committee questioning of the candidates: competition in the local exchange area and the universal services funding. Questioning of candidates took most of two days and then candidates were asked to respond to a number of individual questions in writing.

By the time you read this, either the candidates will have been confirmed by the Senate and sent to the President for appointment, or Congress will have adjourned without the Senate vote. In that case the FCC will not change until some time in 1998.

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**Welcome New Members**

**October, 1997**

(Only primary representatives are listed here)

**Institutional Members**

- Chatham College, Pittsburgh, PA. Robert K. May, 412/365-1322. Tier 1
- Delta State Univ., Cleveland, MS. Charles Boyles, 601/846-4148. Tier 2
- Denison Univ., Granville, OH. Michael O. Frazier, 614/587-6719. Tier 1
- Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science, Philadelphia, PA. Margaret Blacknell, 215/951-2689. Tier 2
- Prairie View A&M Univ., Prairie View, TX. Norman Hunter, 409/857-2525. Tier 2

**Emeritus Membership**

- Durwood Henderson, retired from West Texas A&M Univ., Canyon, TX

**Corporate Affiliates**

**Copper Level**

- Bell South, Raleigh, NC. Phillip W. Betts, 919/783-1253
- Daycom Systems Inc., Carlsbad, CA. Rick Day, 760/431-2961
- Fitel PMX, Nepean, Ontario. David Morin, 613/723-8939 ext. 201
- TTC, Germantown, MD. Randy DaCamara, 301/353-1550
- Rand Associates, Ltd., Farmington, CT. John R. Richardson, 860/678-0448

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**Rat Wires Schools**

Dr. Judy Reavis' pet rat, Rattie, has a special job: She helps wire schools. Reavis got the idea to train Rattie to carry cable through crawlspaces on tough wiring jobs from a colleague who had tried unsuccessfully with his own rat.

As a radiation oncologist, Reavis had experience training rats in research labs, so she knew they were smart, although training, she says, takes a great deal of patience.

How does Rattie do it? Reavis ties a string to the end of a Cat 5 cable and puts the string in Rattie's mouth. Rattie then runs through mazes of dark tunnels, finding the quickest way possible from beginning to end. Reavis then takes the string and pulls the cable through the conduit.

To date, Rattie has helped wire over a half dozen schools. Rattie answers questions via e-mail at judyrat@earthlink.net.
Please submit "position available" information electronically to afuehrer@acuta.org or to ACUTA's homepage: http://www.acuta.org. Descriptions are abbreviated in the newsletter. If you post a position to the Web, please notify afuehrer@acuta.org when the position closes.

Position Available: Project Manager, Telecommunications, Univ. of New Mexico

Responsibilities: Plans, organizes, & coordinates implementation of telecom networks, services, & systems including technical consulting, project planning, on-site coordination, contractor oversight, quality control, & contract management. Manages customer service function. Qualifications: BA/BS (pref. business or technical area) + 5 years exp. directly related to duties/responsibilities specified. Ability to supervise & train assigned staff. Strong interpersonal & communication skills. Knowledge/understanding of adv. telecom systems, eqpt., & services. Contact: Req. #97-3092*A. Closing Date: 11/19/97. Grade: 12 - Salary: $2,612-$3,456/month. Apply to: UNM Human Resources, 1717 Roma NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131. Must list employment history by month & year. Indicate job title & requisition number on application or cover letter. For application, call (505) 272-9606 or check Web site at: http://www.unm.edu/~hrnet/jobs/application.html

Appalachian State Faculty to Try Digitalized Class Rosters: To increase interpersonal relationships between faculty and students, Appalachian State University faculty are using the campus Web server to view and print photos of students in their classes. The roster is created from information provided from faculty and student records and the digitized photos from the campus ID card center. Contact: Jeff Williams, willjt@appstate.edu

Equipment for Sale: ROLM 9751 model 10 3 cabinet AC Powered System, includes all software. Contact: Susan Line, Laramie Community College 1400 E. College Dr., Cheyenne, WY 82007. Phone. 307/778-1229; e-mail sline@mail.lcc.weakc.edu

Online Elections in Costa Rica: According to the New York Times CyberTimes (10/22/97), students from Villanova University Law School are helping the government of Costa Rica launch what appears to be the first test of a national election online. The project will use computers located in schools around the country and linked to the Internet. Security experts at AT&T Labs in New Jersey will help design and implement the system.

Free Calls: A Swedish company has become a hit by offering residential customers free local and long distance phone calls anywhere within Sweden. There's a catch, though: Users hear ten-second advertising spots every three minutes during the call. It seems many users are willing to pay the price in order to eliminate the pricetag.

Fraud—An IXC Combat Plan: MCI and BT have been working together for the last two years on an extensive plan to help combat fraud. The Statistical Heuristic Engine to Reliably and Intelligently Fight Fraud (SHERIFF) compiles calling data generated by MCI and BT data centers. SHERIFF uses artificial intelligence techniques to analyze data patterns, which allows the two companies to pinpoint and even predict where fraud might be occurring in the network.

1998 ACUTA Event Calendar

Winter Seminars • January 11–14 • Tempe, Arizona • The Buttes
Track I: Managing & Monitoring Network Activity • Track II: Legislative & Regulatory Issues

Spring Seminars • April 26–29 • Cincinnati, Ohio • Westin Hotel
Track I: Technology Management Issues • Track II: Disaster Preparedness & Facility Security

27th Annual Conference • July 12–16
San Diego, California • Marriott Hotel & Marina

Fall Seminars • October 11–14 • Dallas, Texas • Le Meridien
Track I: Enterprise Networks • Track II: Marketing Your Student Services & Campus Security Issues