Sixth Annual Institutional Excellence Awards Competition

At the 27th Annual Conference in San Diego next July, ACUTA will once again present its prestigious Institutional Excellence in Telecommunications Award. This award recognizes innovative and exemplary telecommunications endeavors at member institutions that are providing significant advantages to the institution, faculty, staff, and students. The primary goal of the award is to recognize campuses that have enhanced productivity, efficiency, excellence, and professionalism by successfully exploiting the potential of telecommunications.

Last year, the process was streamlined, creating a two-step application/nomination procedure designed to reach out to those who have undertaken exciting, forward-thinking projects during the past year. Many members have been involved in projects that go beyond the necessary day-to-day responsibilities of this job. We want to recognize those who represent the best in campus telecommunications.

One difference in the competition this year is the category structure. A winner may be named in each of three categories: Category 1 now includes schools with full-time enrollments of less than 5,000; Category 2 includes FTE 5,000–15,000; and Category 3 includes those over 15,000.

If you have not received the brochure, call Lisa Cheshire at the ACUTA office (606/278-3338).

Slamming on the Rise

Susan Bahr, Esq.
Blooston, Mordkofsky, Jackson & Dickens

“Slamming”—the unauthorized change to a subscriber’s primary interstate or interLATA interexchange carrier—now also affects intrastate carriers, intralATA carriers, and local telephone companies. In a recent Bell South survey of more than 100,000 customers who had switched local toll carriers, 42% did not know their service had been switched.

Penalties for Slamming

Once subscribers learn of the slam, they usually want the local telephone company to undo the carrier change. The unauthorized carrier also must turn over any revenues it receives to the properly authorized carrier. The FCC is now trying to decide whether the authorized carrier should refund those payments to the subscriber, and whether subscribers may obtain additional damages.

If the FCC handles the slamming complaint, it may impose a fine on the slammer, up to $40,000. At the state level, carriers may have their operating authority taken away, or their staff may be subject to imprisonment.

The FCC has a special interest in eliminating slamming. In the first half of 1997, the FCC received 12,000 slamming complaints. Slamming also is a
President's Column
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in the late 1800s, was actually named “Golden Rule” Jones by his employees for his ardent following of this “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” management system.

When Jones opened his factory in Toledo in 1893, our nation had just suffered its greatest losses in the worst depression ever experienced. Jones was profoundly affected by the homeless, helpless, and unemployed victims of this era. He vowed to apply all the good and just practices he had learned, especially the Golden Rule, in his factory which he still planned to open during such hard times.

Jones posted the Golden Rule prominently on the wall of his factory on opening day. He had no foreman and no time clocks. He instituted unheard of benefits for the workers, such as low-cost employee stock options and eight-hour work shifts so more men had work and also more time with family. He sponsored employee picnics and gave Christmas bonuses to every worker, and most amazing of all, he rewarded his employees with a week of paid vacation every year. He built a park, a playground, and a meeting hall where educational speakers were invited to teach the employees ways to improve their lives. He often hired the homeless and unskilled, and some of these “derelicts” turned out to be his most valued employees.

The people urged Jones to run for mayor of Toledo, and he won the election. Immediately he began to apply the Golden Rule to the work of the government offices. He established civil service exams to protect and secure jobs for the city workers, implemented eight-hour work shifts, and set minimum wage tables for every type of job. Already wealthy from his successful factory, he turned over his entire mayoral salary to his trustworthy clerk to be distributed to the poor, dipping into his own personal fortune whenever the salary was depleted before filling every need. It was learned after his death from pneumonia in 1904 that during his seven-year term of office he had distributed more than $700,000—about 2/3 of his wealth, which would be equivalent to $13 million today.

Yet Golden Rule Jones was humble and kind in every way, never resting on his laurels for any of these or other accomplishments. It was however, his greatest victory by his own admission, when he was at last able to suppress his own basic human nature through a personal application of the Golden Rule, by not responding with anger or action against an opponent who unfairly attacked him and his government policies and practices. Jones was truly a man who walked his talk, and he was trusted and respected by all of his peers, his employees, his friends, and his family.

As we approach the new year, let’s review what we’ve done and how we’ve done it, making adjustments in our management style as needed. And remember: Not everything that counts can be counted!

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATORS
ACUTA NEWS, Vol. 26, No. 12

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Slamming
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hot topic in Congress. Hearings on slamming were held in 1997, and several bills were introduced to increase penalties for slammers and increase damages that subscribers may obtain. Slamming will be one of Congress’ priorities when it returns in 1998.

Preventing the Slam
To prevent slamming, the FCC recommends obtaining an “account freeze” from a local telephone company (sometimes called a “PIC freeze”).

With an account freeze, a customer must directly ask the local telephone company to make the carrier change, rather than having a change made at the request of the long distance company. Freezes may be especially valuable to a large college or university that needs to ensure that account changes aren’t made haphazardly.

While greater penalties may be on the horizon for slammers, higher education institutions may want to take their own steps to prevent slamming through account freezes or other procedural safeguards in the short term.

Susan Bahr, Esq., is an attorney with the Washington DC firm of Bloosten, Mordkofsky, Jackson & Dickens. She can be reached via e-mail at sbahr@aol.com.
Board Report
November, 1997
The Board held the monthly conference call on 11/06/97.

The Executive Director reported on her visit to Kent State on 10/29/97 to present the third-place award in the Student Paper Competition to Arlene Eisenman-Palka. Jeri also reported that a presentation visit with Hartwick College, this year’s winner in the medium-school category of the Institutional Excellence award, is tentatively scheduled for February. A campus visit with the University of Kentucky for presentation of the Institutional Excellence Award in the large-school category has yet to be scheduled.

Other items:
• Approval of Local Event to be held at Cornell Univ. on June 8-9, 1998.
• Approval of new committee appointments
• Tony Mordosky provided an update on FCC actions or lack thereof regarding the Universal Service Fund.
• Dawn Lotz reported the Marketing Committee is working on an advertisement to be placed in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Respectfully submitted:

Tony Mordosky
Bradley University
ACUTA Secretary/Treasurer

A Great Seminar
Anne Apicella
Univ. of New Mexico

Speaking as both an attendee and one of the host schools, I consider the Fall Seminar a great experience.

As an ACUTA member since 1990, I have attended the Annual Conference every year except one, but this is the first time I have attended a seminar. Budget constraints have forced me to limit the number of trips I can take, but the Fall Seminar was right here in Albuquerque.

When I first arrived on Sunday afternoon, I was somewhat surprised by the small scale of the seminar. The vendor exhibit area was much smaller than we have at the annual conference, and there were only two seminar rooms to contain the two track presentations. Where was the glitz, the glamour, the excitement of the annual conference?

I soon learned that the seminars don’t need the trappings of the Annual Conference to be a very worthwhile experience. The seminars have charms of their own. For instance, because the seminars are limited to two tracks, each of the subjects can be treated in depth, allowing a meaningful examination of a topic. The smaller groups of attendees stay together for the duration of the seminar, allowing members to get to know each other better and form friendships. Finally, the vendor exhibits were appropriate to the subject matter and the attendees seemed to be happy to spend lots of time with the exhibitors.

We had the honor of serving as one of the host schools, too, and that further enhanced my experience. The duties of the host school are not too taxing, but the rewards are overwhelming. We spent more time with the other attendees, and the networking was great!

Thanks to the ACUTA staff for making the Albuquerque event such a success. Your professionalism once again made the seminar meaningful and worthwhile. I now know the value of the seminars and plan to have members of my staff participate as frequently as possible.

Reach Anne Apicella at apicella@unm.edu

Board Approves
New Appointments

In November the Board approved various committee positions appointments including:

Marketing Committee
• Bill Gruszka, SUNY Oswego
• Jan Weller, Univ. of Kansas
• Marjorie Windelberg, Gannon Univ.

Awards Committee
• Lief Aagaard, Sweet Briar College
• Clay Hopkins, Eastern Illinois Univ.
• Paul Bolz, Pinnacle Software
• Bill Toussaint, Western Telecommunications Group

Student Paper Awards task force
• Jeffery Kuhns, Penn State Univ.

The Board encourages all ACUTA members to get more involved by volunteering for one of the many ACUTA committees.

Meet Me at… UM

The SCP (Student Conferencing Project) is making campus life more student-friendly at the University of Michigan with a computer conferencing program called Confer U. The SCP currently runs three conferences for students:
• Meet-Ourselves, a health-related conference that discusses doctors, dieting, illness, exercise, and more.
• Meet-Planners, an organizational conference that deals with policies and issues relating to the SCP and Confer in general.
• Meet-Students, a general social conference where students discuss just about anything and everything. It’s the new-tech way to meet people.

For more detailed information, see the site for yourself at http://www.umich.edu/~umscep/.
On the Move

Congratulations to Jeanne Spinosa who has left Salve Regina University to accept a position as Director of Telecom for the State of Rhode Island. One of her first projects with the state will be to universalize the telephone systems throughout the state offices. She says she plans to handle this, and her other duties, with "hard work, a good sense of humor, and patience."

Jeanne believes that working on the collegiate level has given her the perfect background for her new job. She applauds ACUTA for encouraging communications among colleagues and has appreciated ACUTA's list-serve especially as an avenue for professional growth. Jeanne hopes to be involved in such an organization on the state level.

1998 ACUTA Events

Winter Seminars
January 11-14 • Tempe, AZ
• Legislative & Regulatory Issues
• Managing & Monitoring Network Activity

Spring Seminars
April 26-29 • Cincinnati, OH
• Technology Management Issues
• Disaster Preparedness & Facility Security

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

Fall Seminars
October 11-14 • Dallas, TX
• Enterprise Networks
• Marketing Student Services & Campus Security Issues

Spotlight

Welcome to one of ACUTA's most recent Corporate Affiliate members:

WallAN (www.walain.com) provides advanced network connectivity including 8 Mbps full duplex symmetrical devices using copper pairs. Bandwidth management products improve utilization & security of data. All are easy to install, easy to use, and easy to support. Jack Dowling, 408/452-8081 x614

Achieving Top Staff Performance

Several years ago, I attended a course in Total Quality Management for associations. The most powerful message of the course—one that has remained with me through all these years—was that "All errors are management errors."

At first, I didn't totally understand this message, based on the teachings of TQM guru Dr. W. Edwards Deming. Surely employees are responsible for their actions and results. And while that is true, I've grown to understand and accept the meaning behind the message: We as managers must assume responsibility for proper planning, selecting the right people for the job, giving complete and accurate instructions for expected outcomes, ensuring that the needed resources are available to produce the desired product and creating an atmosphere of continuous improvement. And if results aren't up to the level expected, than we must take responsibility for analyzing the reasons and putting the systems in place to correct any problems.

One of the challenges that university telecommunications managers face is an environment of rapid change and increased workload, often with an inability to provide financial incentives for top performance. One of the resulting conditions has been termed "employee rustout." Different from "burnout"—rustout is a situation where employee potential is underused, resulting in mediocre performance.

As we enter the cold, damp Winter season, I'd like to offer some suggestions to inhibit rust:

• Look for the four Ds that signal rust: "Disengaged" employees have quit but are still getting paid.

From ACUTA Headquarters

Jeri A. Semer, CAE
Executive Director

"Disidentified" workers feel they were important, but are no longer. "Disoriented" employees no longer know where they fit in. Finally, "Disenchanted" workers feel they are not valued.

• Meet with suspected rustout victims, and attempt to learn why performance is slipping. Only when employees realize they are rusting out can the process be stopped.

• Offer to help rustouts improve their skills. Investing in training can go a long way toward rust removal.

• Spell out how these employees contribute to the organization's strategic objectives and success. It's hard to expect peak performance when employees don't recognize the importance of their jobs.

• Reinforce rustout recovery by recognizing contributions. Encouragement is like fine oil—not only does it keep the rust away, but it helps keep things running smoothly.

Have a wonderful Holiday season, and we hope to see you in Tempe, Arizona for the ACUTA Winter Seminar.

1 Thanks to "Forum", the magazine of the Association Forum of Chicagoland, for information on employee rustout, adopted from Robert McGarvey writing in "Entrepreneur."
FCC Commissioners
In October the Senate approved the nomination of Republicans Harold W. Furchtgott-Roth and Michael K. Powell as well as Democrat Gloria Tristani to seats on the Commission. William E. Kennard, who was approved as the new FCC Chairman, sounds like he will be pro-consumer. He indicated during the first press conference that he was in "listening mode" and was seeking input on some issues.

Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
In October, the Eighth Circuit Court in St. Louis made more decisions related to the FCC’s “landmark carrier interconnection” order.” Last July the court acted against the local competitive pricing rules, saying the Commission didn’t have the authority to issue those rules. This time the court vacated the FCC rule that allowed requesting carriers to purchase unbundled elements of a local exchange carrier’s network in combined packages. Under this ruling, neither the FCC nor the state regulators can require LECs to combine unbundled network elements. CLECs will now have the right to combine the unbundled elements as they see fit. “Despite the Commission’s arguments, the plain meaning of the Act indicates that the requesting carriers will combine the unbundled elements themselves; the Act does not require the incumbent LECs to do all of the work,” the court said. (TR 10/20/97)

The FCC has 90 days from October 14 to ask for a review by the Supreme Court. Former Chairman Hundt was not happy with the ruling by the court and would very likely have taken the case to the higher court. Sources seem to indicate that this ruling may be one more factor slowing competition at the local level.

Universal Services Fund
The appeal by the educational groups that would have exempted colleges and universities from having to pay into the fund came to a vote by the old Commission. Although three Commissioners voted for the ruling revision and clarification, one declined to vote. That means the decision falls to the new Commission, and those presenting the proposed clarification must start over and sell the plan for Higher Education.

AT&T Flat Rates
On November 8 a new flat rate structure with no mileage bands went into effect for some AT&T residential customers. The new plan offers one price for "peak" (weekdays, 7 am–7 pm), "off peak" (weekdays, 7 pm–7 am) and "weekend" (Saturday/Sunday). ACUTA members may have to watch for something like this structure to begin to show up in rate discussions with vendors.

Internet Fraud Detection
Telecommunications Reports (10/20/97) notes that the United States is participating in a global effort to track down sites on the Internet that are used to defraud customers. Australia led the crackdown with cooperation of about 25 other countries. This type of fraud is reportedly costing customers as much as $50 million per week. Those who are subject to this type of fraud are the people who buy goods and services over the Internet. Based on international experience, as many as 10% of those transactions may be fraudulent. Representatives from the countries involved are sharing information about fraudulent sites on the Web, and intend to prosecute those identified as fraudulent.

Journal Editorial Calendar for 1998
The Publications Committee has determined the theme for each of the four issues of the Journal for 1998.

While not every article in any issue will deal directly with the theme, we invite you to consider these topics and share information about your campus with the membership. Need editorial assistance? Just contact Pat Scott at 606/278-3338 or e-mail pscott@acuta.org.

Spring
Legislative and Regulatory Issues

Summer
Disaster Preparedness
Copy due: 2/15/98

Fall
Funding the Enterprise:
Telecom Auxiliary Services
Copy due: 5/15/98

Winter
Enterprise Networks:
Implementing New Technologies and Managing Assets
Copy due: 8/15/98

Welcome New Members
November, 1997
(Only primary representatives are listed here)

Institutional Member
• Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT
  Ganesan Ravishanker, 860/685-2104
  Tier 2

Corporate Affiliates
BRONZE LEVEL
• WITTel Communications, LLC, McLean,
  VA
  Julia Ashley, 703/712-7765

COlPER LEVEL
• Business Service Center, Vienna, VA
  Mary Barr, 703/821-3500
• Edify Corp., Santa Clara, CA
  Tony Harris, 408/982-4079

WALAN Communications, Inc., San
  Jose, CA
  John Dowling, 408/452-8081
Position Available: Associate V.P. for Information Services, West Chester Univ. of PA
Responsibilities: Provide vision, leadership, strategic planning, & coordination of all aspects of info. tech., incl. acad./admin. computing, network svcs., dist. learning, user support, & telecom. Qualifications: Master's Deg. req., PhD pref. Salary: To low 80s. Contact: Letter of interest describing relevant prof. accomplishments, current resume, 3+ refs to: Valerie Dudley, Emp., Mgr., c/o Assoc. Vice Pres., for Info. Svcs. Search, Human Res. Svcs., 201 Carter Dr., West Chester Univ., West Chester, PA 19383; Ph:610/436-2800; Fax 610/436-3464

Position Available: Telecom Technician 2 Grade N-12, Northwestern Univ.
Responsibilities: Knowledge of gen. electronics & electronic theory; use and care of tools and test equipment, troubleshooting skills, ability to lift 50 pounds, climb ladders & work shifts. Qualifications: AA/AS + 2 yr. technical training or job exp. 2 yr. exp. req. Salary: $12.96-14.78, 40 hr/wk. Contact: Lee Morgan, 2001 Sheridan Rd., Leverone Hall Rm G166, Evanston, IL 60201

Position Available: Dir. of Telecom/Associate Dir. of Business Services, FL State Univ.
Responsibilities: Planning, coordination, administration, and operational control of University-wide telecom activities. Qualifications: BA/BS + 6yr exp. in design, engineering, installation & maintenance of communications, telephone, & electronic systems Contact: Michael D. Hankin 415-D Westcott, Florida State Univ., Tallahassee, Florida 32306 Application must be received by 12/15/97

Position Available: Chief Information Officer, Central Michigan Univ.
Responsibilities: Provide leadership & vision, oversee planning, initiate innovative uses of info tech. Resp. for academic/admin. computing, telecom, campus network planning, inst. tech., distance/distrib. ed. Qualifications: Extensive relevant exp.; record of increasingly responsible, successful mgmt. exp. pref. in univ. setting; broad knowledge of inst. technologies, computing, telecom; dem. leadership skills, vision; exc. communication skills. Pref. earned doctorate. Contact: Letter of application, resume, statement of educ, admin. philosophy, plus 3-5 refs to Office of Provost, Academic Affairs Search, Warriner Hall 112, Cent. Michigan Univ., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859. Ph. 517/774-3931; fax 517/774-2042. EO/AA

8 Positions Available: Univ. of Nevada, Reno

Position Available: Telecom Technician, SUNY Geneseo

Position Available: Telecom Technician, Elmhurst College
Responsibilities: Troubleshoot, perform diagnostics, maintain inventory, keep accurate records, oversee student workers. Qualifications: Some college, 2+ yrs. exp in telecom, knowledge and exp. with software as related to job responsibilities. Contact: Fax resume to Elmhurst College. 630/617-3746 RE: Telecommunications Tech Position