

## **Technology Advisory Board (TAB) Minutes of Meeting of November 18, 1998**

Location: AHT 4th Floor Conference Room

Time: 2:00 - 3:00PM

**In attendance:** Chris Hood, Surya Singh, Rob Power, Bill Drumwright, Matt Disney, Faye Muly, Jerry Stoneking, Susan Metros, Mark Hall, Kenneth Walker, Jeff Maples, and William Britten.

**Others present:** Steve Keys and Frances Fogerson

### **Handouts:**

1. Draft of Technology Fee Policies and Procedures
2. GSA Resolution # 05-99 (Vol Connection)
3. Technology Advisory Board Bylaws

### **Discussion 1 - Tech Fee Policies & Procedures:**

Disney asked members to review the draft document. Muly pointed out the fee assessment policy, which affects the practice of granting fee waivers to students who are registered, but are not on campus (as in out-of-state internships). She explained that many benefits are available from off-campus, and that the fee is an investment in the university's information infrastructure.

Walker asked which departments most frequently requested waivers and Muly named several. Walker then asked that a memo be distributed to those departments explaining the change.

Disney called for a vote to accept the Technology Fee Policies and Procedures as written.

Passed by voice vote, no member against.

The change in fee waiver policy will be implemented for the next academic year, beginning Fall Semester 1999. This will maintain consistency for the current academic year, and provide sufficient time for full notification to departments and students.

### **Discussion 2 - Vol Connection:**

Disney asked members to review the SGA resolution that listed student concerns about the Vol Connection phone service. Power explained that students were seriously concerned and expected the issue of phone service to the Rental Properties to be resolved as quickly as possible. He stated they had expected an answer in October.

Steve Keys, team leader of Telephone Services, addressed those concerns. First, he stated that a new contract is in dispute based on the actions of one bidder who was not selected. When this is

resolved -- and it is expected soon -- customers will be notified. Delays have solely been the result of the disputed award decision.

Keys noted that UT has a 15-cents a minute rate for domestic long distance. This rate includes all federally-approved fees. (The rate is actually 10.5-cents a minute, plus the three fees, rounded to 15-cents.) He admitted that other carriers advertise attractive rates such as 5-cent Sundays or 10-cents a minute, but these rates do not include fees. When fees are inclusive, these "special rates" actually cost as much (or more) than UT's 15-cent rate. It would be more helpful, Keys explained, to compare total costs, not advertised partial costs.

Keys also stated that basic telephone service is charged at \$16.25 per month and is inclusive of all charges and fees. One specific service is repair of wiring outside and inside a residence. Other companies provide repair only outside and charge \$65 an hour for inside repair. He explained that bills are not broken down, and customers may not be aware of what they are receiving for the flat fee. Separating the fees on the bill would add to current operating costs.

On the matter of 10-10 dial around services, Keys said that there are approximately 4000 such providers. Recent news programs have documented many billing irregularities with these services. The problem with providing UT customers access to these services is that UT disclaims disputed calls and many 10-10 providers will not do this. Therefore, they will not link with UT because of this policy.

Drumwright asked Keys if Telephone Services made any profit with their current rate schedules. Keys responded that they did, and explained how the funds were reinvested in additional equipment such as emergency phones (80 at \$6000 each), cabling, and telephone upgrades. On the latter, he stated that the 1992 Rolm voice mail system was not Year 2000 compliant and had to be upgraded. A new television cable system to curb unauthorized use was also purchased.

To a question about international long distance rates, Keys said that they expect a new contract soon. He noted that rates have been reduced 65% in the last 4 months. While they hope to reduce cost even more, it may not be possible to do this for each and every country. Telephone Services is willing to advise customers on choosing companies based on individual country called most frequently (because each country is different). They should also be aware that add-on fees are applicable to international calls and may affect cost comparisons.

Power asked about ways to communicate cost comparisons to customers. Keys stated they would put an insert in the telephone bill. This method was preferred because a newspaper ad may not be seen by all customers, but each would open a bill.

Singh asked if Telephone Services could provide a rate schedule. Keys said that was possible, but complicated since international rates can change monthly. Also, there are over 400 countries to consider.

The board members thanked Keys for his information.

**Other Business, Announcements, or Questions:**

None

Minutes prepared by: Frances Fogerson