6-11: Microcomputer Support

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I. Purpose
This policy describes the fiscal and operating procedures for implementing and managing the systematic technical support of College-owned computer workstations.

II. Authority
The most current revision was reviewed and approved by the College Vice Presidents.

III. Workstation Refresh Program

A. History and Summary. Beginning in fiscal year 1996-97, general access student computer labs and classrooms were placed on a regular three-year replacement cycle, using funds from the Academic Information Technology (AIT) student fee. As of fiscal year 2001-02, fee funds provided for the replacement of 268 computers located in 10 facilities across campus. An additional 342 computers, in numerous classrooms, general access labs, departmental labs, and other student-accessible locations, were unfunded. Also as of fiscal year 2001-02, an additional 765 computers were located in academic and administrative departments, none on a regular replacement schedule. This represented a total of 1375 identified workstations, the initial "installed base," that was used in establishing the beginning base funding for the Workstation Refresh Program.

Through this Program, the College intends to provide for the regular replacement of the entire installed base. Beginning in fiscal year 2002-03, a central budget was established to support three-year replacement of approved College-owned workstations in offices, departmental labs, smart classrooms, and residence hall labs (initially 975 workstations). For fiscal year 2003-04, the AIT fee will need to be increased to provide replacement for unfunded workstations in general access computer labs, computer classrooms, and kiosks (a total of 400 workstations). AIT fee supported facilities were approved in the initial student referendum, and additions are presented to the students as part of the normal fee approval process.

B. Financial Plan. The AIT budget has been established as a General Fund budget since 1996-97. Revenue for the AIT budget comes from student AIT fees, in accordance with currently established rates for these fees.

The Workstation Refresh budget is established as a Revolving Fund. For every workstation in the installed base, a monthly usage charge (initially $38.89) will be applied, equal to the base workstation cost (now $1400) divided by the term of the replacement cycle (now 3 years), divided by twelve months. These charges will be made against budgets established in the General Fund, the Auxiliary Fund, and various other Revolving Funds, in proportion to the computers in the installed base.

In accordance with College fiscal policy, the Revolving Fund will be managed to maintain a non-negative fund balance. Once each budget year, the fund balance of the Workstation Revolving Fund will be examined and a determination made whether the funding parameters (per workstation cost and refresh period) need to be adjusted for the following fiscal year. At minimum, this analysis will consider the portion of workstations replaced and the portion of available funds expended in the previous year. In the event that expenditures in the Revolving Fund are less than the amount budgeted in a given year, remaining funds will roll forward into the next year as a fund balance.

Workstation Refresh Revolving Fund monies shall be used only for these identified purposes:

* Purchases of new workstation computer hardware, and any software or services bundled with the hardware, for stations in the installed base.

C. Managing the installed base.

1. Installed base established. The initial installed base was established by a physical inventory conducted in fall 2001. A small amount of error in the count has to be assumed. Regardless of any potential error, the intent of the Workstation Refresh Program is to replace all College-owned computers in the installed base on a three-year rotation.

2. Current installed base. The current installed base is defined as those workstations which are recorded in the charge-back database (i.e., those workstations for which a $38.89 monthly usage charge is applied). In some situations, computers may be owned by the College but not in the installed base; see section III-D, Guidelines for Including Systems in the Installed Base.

3. Modifying the installed base. Any changes (additions, deletions, transfers) to the current installed base, must be approved in advance by the College Vice Presidents in collaboration, to ensure that continuing funding supports the entire installed base. A one-for-one replacement (which does not involve an addition, deletion, or transfer) will be the norm, and this transaction does not require administrative approval.

a. The Vice Presidents must approve the addition of a station to the installed base, whether purchased using General Fund or grant monies, or acquired by any other means including gifts.

b. The responsible Vice President must approve the deletion of a station from the installed base.

c. The responsible Vice President must approve the transfer of a station to another department within the College.

An electronic mail message to Computing & Telecommunications from a Vice President shall constitute approval of change to the current installed base.

D. Guidelines for Including Systems in the Installed Base.

1. Networked Systems Only. Computers that are not attached to the College network via an Ethernet connection will not be included in the installed base, and will not be refreshed. For purposes of this section, laptops are considered to be networked if they are configured to be networked. Computing and Telecommunications personnel are not authorized to provide support for computers that are not networked (see section IV-C). The appropriate Vice President and the Director of Computing & Telecommunications must approve exceptions to this provision.

2. Standard Systems Only. The Workstation Refresh Program will provide standard computer system configurations designed to meet most needs within available budget. Additional configuration add-ons and/or custom configured systems will not be provided by the Program, but will be at the expense of the requesting department.

3. One Person, One Computer. The Workstation Refresh Program will provide one, and only one, computer for every College employee who needs a computer to perform the duties assigned by the College. This will include part-time employees who are assigned workspace on the campus.

4. Additional Computers for Certain Individuals. Departmental funds may be used to buy additional computer(s) for particular individuals (for example, a laptop in addition to a Refresh-provided desktop). These additional computers will not be included in the installed base. Computing & Telecommunications will provide support (if other criteria for support are met) until the additional systems would be due for refresh. At that time, if a system is not refreshed (with departmental funds), support will be withdrawn and the computer may be disconnected from the network.

5. Grant-funded computers. In general, grant proposals which fund additional computers are approved if there are no major support issues created by the grant program. Computers acquired through grants will not be part of the installed base, by default. Computing & Telecommunications will provide support (if other criteria for support are met) until the granted systems would be due for refresh. At that time, if a system is not refreshed (with departmental funds or by joining the installed base with Vice Presidential approval), support will be withdrawn and the computer may be disconnected from the network.

6. Other Systems in the Installed Base. All other systems owned by the College, which meet the above criteria, will be included in the installed base.

7. Tracking the Installed Base. Computing & Telecommunications personnel will track College-owned computers using the following categories:

a. Individual or departmental systems that are in the installed base.

b. Lab or classroom systems that are in the installed base.

c. Departmentally funded systems that are not in the installed base but supported.

d. Grant funded systems that are not in the installed base but supported.

e. Unsupported systems.

E. Accelerating the upgrade schedule. In unusual situations, the appropriate Vice President may accelerate the upgrade schedule for a particular piece of equipment in the installed base by "purchasing" the remainder of the time left on the equipment. For example, if a system is two years old, an amount equal to one-third of the workstation budget would be required to upgrade the system early. To accomplish this transfer, the responsible Vice President will provide Computing & Telecommunications with a budget code, and Computing & Telecommunications will accomplish the one-time transfer through the normal automated process, into the Revolving Fund. Such schedule accelerations are subject to staffing availability, and will be accomplished on an as-possible basis.

F. Replaced equipment is retired. In general, equipment that is replaced under the AIT Program or the Workstation Refresh Program is removed from service at the College, and disposed of in accordance with State fiscal rules. Such equipment may be transferred to other State agencies, sold at public auction, or in some cases donated to outside non-profit or tax-supported organizations. Equipment disposition is managed by the Purchasing Office. Retired equipment will be removed from service by Computing & Telecommunications and transferred to Purchasing for disposition.

1. No unfunded equipment proliferation. Under no circumstances will Computing & Telecommunications install new equipment, funded by the AIT fee or the Workstation Refresh program, without either receiving retired equipment on a one-for-one basis or modifying the current installed base, as described above.

2. No support for equipment not in the installed base. In some instances, the Vice Presidents in collaboration may approve keeping replaced equipment in service (perhaps by assigning the computer to an employee for College-related use at home). In such situations, the equipment will be clearly marked as not in the current installed base. Computing and Telecommunications will not provide any support services for workstation equipment that is not in the current installed base, regardless of where the equipment is located.

G. Determining upgrade priorities. The College believes that a replacement schedule which brings entire departments to approximately the same level of workstation currency is in the common interest. However, as the Program is implemented, some modification of a department-based schedule is necessary because some equipment is very old.

1. Replace very old equipment first. During the first approximately fifteen months of the program, the oldest workstations on campus, independent of department, will be replaced.

2. Then oldest, by department. Subsequently, departments will be prioritized and upgraded according to the approximate average age of equipment.

3. Individual workstations out of "synch" with department cycle. Several circumstances will result in a particular workstation being on a different upgrade schedule than other stations in the department. For example, a new position may be created, or a particular upgrade may have been

accelerated. In this situation, a decision must be made at the next department upgrade, whether to include the "out-of-synch" station with systems funded for upgrade by the Refresh program. A station will be included if it is older than half the current replacement cycle; else, not.

H. The business process. Computing & Telecommunications will develop such business processes as are required to administer, manage, and execute the Workstation Refresh program in fiscally responsible fashion. Such processes will implement configuration standards, electronic ordering, bulk purchasing and receiving, hard-drive image installation at the factory, and other innovations to existing processes which will control the growth of equipment and personnel costs.

IV. Other General Policy Provisions.

A. Purchase of Computer Hardware and Software - The Director of Computing & Telecommunications must approve all purchases of computer and telecommunications hardware and software made using College funds (including grant funds). In general, only purchases of hardware and software from College standard vendors are approved. If purchases from non-standard vendors are approved, the equipment is not supported by Computing & Telecommunications. A department purchasing unsupported hardware or software assumes responsibility for all technical support for that hardware or software. Computing & Telecommunications makes no warranty, by purchase approval, that unsupported hardware is compatible with other College equipment, software, or communications networks.

B. Modifying what hardware and software is officially supported - The Director of Computing & Telecommunications shall determine changes, from time to time, in the hardware and software officially supported by the College. These decisions will be made in consideration of industry trends and College requirements, and as needed in consultation with appropriate College committees, Computing & Telecommunications staff, and the College administration.

C. Support for networked equipment only - To improve efficiency in the utilization of limited personnel, the Computing & Telecommunications increasingly uses automated methods to install and configure software, troubleshoot system problems, and provide assistance in using applications. These automated services cannot be provided on personal computer equipment that is not connected to the College network.

Effective August 2001, Computing & Telecommunications will no longer provide support for computer equipment that is not connected to the College network. The Director must approve any exceptions to this policy in writing.

D. Microcomputer hardware maintenance - Computing & Telecommunications has a small budget to provide personal computer equipment repairs. These repairs are performed internally or by outside contractors depending on the type of repair.

With the advent of the Workstation Refresh Program most repairs will be covered by warranty from the vendors. Other normal repairs to College-owned and supported microcomputer

equipment will be provided and paid for by Computing & Telecommunications to the extent that funding allows.

The cost of repairing damage caused by negligence will be charged to the department responsible.

Out-dated equipment needing repair may be retired at the discretion of Computing & Telecommunications. The decision will be based on the availability of parts, the cost of repair, and the use of the machine. Retired equipment will not be supported, and should be sent to Central Stores for disposal. Departments may also choose to retire equipment.

To be eligible for maintenance, purchases must be made using College funds, the Director of Computing & Telecommunications must approve the purchase, and the equipment must be officially supported.

E. Installing and Removing Software on the Campus Network Servers - Campus network servers are managed by Computing & Telecommunications. New software may be installed on these servers upon written (or email) request by a College employee, approval of the employee's department chair, and a judgment by Computing & Telecommunications that adequate hardware resources are available. Because campus network services are well used by many people when school is in session, new network services are only created during summer or the breaks at Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Spring. Approved requests to install software must be received by Computing & Telecommunications in time to accommodate this schedule. Before networked software will be installed, a minimum of five software licenses must be purchased, subject to increase depending on actual demand. In no case will more network accesses to the software be allowed than there are valid licenses.

As much as allowed by software compatibility, the entire suite of available lab software is made available at each workstation in each public lab, via the network. As software-licensing agreements allow, departmentally dedicated labs and personal workstations may have access to this suite of software, with special purpose software installed locally.

Notice of intent to remove software from campus network servers will be provided at least thirty days prior to removal. Notice will be published on the Computing & Telecommunications web page and posted in the major public labs.

F. Software Upgrades on Campus Network Servers - Software on servers will be upgraded as necessary, and as funding allows, in accordance with defined support levels for each product. Notice of intent to upgrade will be posted on the Computing & Telecommunications web page and in the major public labs at least thirty days prior to the actual upgrade. Since software on campus network servers is a College-wide resource, incompatibilities with particular individual or departmental software or computer hardware shall not stand in the way of central server upgrades judged to be in the overall interest.

G. Central Purchase of Software Licenses - Software to be installed on campus network servers for the general good of the College may be funded through Computing & Telecommunications.

Requests for such purchases must be approved by the Instructional Technology Committee or the Administrative Systems Management Team and forwarded in writing to the Director by October 1, and by February 1, of each fiscal year.

Certain software products (for example, Microsoft Office, Microsoft Outlook, SCT Banner) are regarded as College standards for particular applications, and nearly all computer users are expected to need access to these products. For software in this category, site licenses will be acquired centrally, and the software made available on College-owned and supported equipment without charge to the user department.

Certain other software products (for example, SPSS) are regarded as College standards for particular applications, but the use of these products is not prevalent among all computer users. In these cases, a limited number of licenses will be acquired centrally, as funding allows, and the software made available on College-owned and supported equipment on an as-needed basis.

Other special purpose software licenses (for example, foreign language tutorial software) will not be acquired centrally, but are the responsibility of the particular department. Computing & Telecommunications may still, at the request of the department, deliver such software via network resources, depending on the individual case.

H. College-owned and otherwise supportable equipment located off-campus - Computing & Telecommunications will provide technical support for College-owned equipment and software located off campus in non-residential sites, as approved by the Director. Computing & Telecommunications will not provide technical support for College owned equipment and software that is located off campus in residential sites. (The use of College funds to contract for the support of such College owned equipment and software is allowed.)

I. Personally owned computer equipment and software - The use of College staff resources to support employees' personally owned equipment and software is a questionable fiscal practice. These resources are to be used exclusively in support of the mission of the College. Further, personally owned equipment is often not similar to equipment or software owned by the College, making troubleshooting more time consuming. Therefore, Computing & Telecommunications will not provide technical support for personally owned computer equipment and software, even though the equipment may be located on campus.