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FEDERAL UPDATES

ED Publishes Minimum Technical Standards Reminder

On September 27, 2001, ED published a reminder that all schools are required to have certain PC hardware and software specifications in place by January 1, 2002, for the 2002-2003 school year. The specifications were originally mailed to each participating school's President or Chief Executive Officer in November 2000.

Hardware

The new PC hardware requirements include the following:

- IBM or fully IBM-compatible PC with a Pentium 800 MHz processor or comparable;
- 128 MB RAM or more;
- 20 GB hard drive or more;
- 56K modem (that meets or can be upgraded to V.90 standard);
- Windows 95 keyboard;
- Microsoft compatible mouse;
- Laser printer capable of printing on standard paper (8 ½ by 11);
- 24x CD-ROM drive or higher, with sound board;
- 3.5" / 1.44 MB Diskette Drive and 3.5" High-Density double-sided diskettes; and
- Monitor and video card capable of Super Video Graphics Adapter (SVGA).

Software

The software requirements include the following:

- A 32-bit operating system (Microsoft Windows 98, Microsoft Windows NT 4.0, Microsoft 2000 or Microsoft ME); and
- An Internet Service Provider (ISP) that supports a 56K modem connection or higher.

Schools also must have Microsoft Internet Explorer Version 4.01, Service Pack 2 or higher, or Netscape Navigator Version 4.73 or higher.

Supported networks include Windows NT or Novell networks. Schools should also have a dedicated phone line for data transmission.

More Information and Questions

For more information on the new technical minimum standards, schools can access the publication “Analyzing your SFA Computing Needs to be more Productive and Save Money” from the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) web site at www.ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/attachments/1129MinPCneeds.pdf.

For questions, contact CPS/WAN Technical Support at (800) 330-5947 or send an e-mail message to CPSWAN@NCS.COM.

Nominee Announced to Head Postsecondary Education Office

President Bush announced this month that he intends to nominate Sally Stroup, a highly regarded expert on student aid policy, to be ED’s Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education. Stroup comes with a diverse background, currently serving as Director of Industry and Governmental Affairs for the Apollo Group, Inc., and as the chief Washington lobbyist for the University of Phoenix.

From 1993 to 2001, she served as a top aide to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce where she was responsible for higher education policy and budget and appropriations matters. Prior to her job on Capitol Hill, Stroup worked for 11 years at one of the larger national guaranty agencies.

Her appointment has been well received within the higher education community and confirmation of her nomination is expected to be smooth.

TG UPDATES

Teleconference to Focus on Disaster Guidance, Business Recovery and Continuation

In keeping with recent events and in response to requests from TG customers, on November 6, 2001, TG will present a teleconference focusing on two topics related to the September 11 attacks: Disaster Guidance pertaining to higher education and Business Recovery and Continuation. The conference, one of TG’s Quarterly Telephone Conferences for Financial Aid Partners from Strategic Partnerships, will be held from 2-4 p.m. Central.

Disaster Guidance

At 2 p.m., Brent Hay and Kelly Kaelin from TG’s Policy and Regulatory Affairs will present information about the disaster guidance recently distributed by the Department of Education. Topics will include military mobilization, return of Title IV funds, loan repayment, and any other issues that may evolve as repercussions of the disaster unfold within higher education.

Business Recovery and Continuation

At 3 p.m., Jim Johnson, Information Risk Manager overseeing Business Contingency Planning and Information Security at TG, will present the outline of a Business Continuation Plan and discuss technology and security issues for such a plan. Mr. Johnson is President of the Capital of Texas Association of Contingency Planners and has been certified in Business Continuity Planning since 1992.

Following Mr. Johnson's presentation, Bob Lawson from The University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio (UTHSC) will share details of UTHSC's recently completed plan and discuss the process of developing such a plan in a financial aid office.

Registration and More Information

For more information or to register for the telephone conference, contact Premier Teleconference Service at (800) 289-0579 or send an e-mail message to theresa.schlaak@premconf.com. The event is free of charge and you may enroll as many participants from your institution as you like.

To ensure that your questions about the featured topics are answered during the event, you may submit them in advance to Sheila Casey at sheila.casey@tgscl.org.

Future Teleconference

What's next? TG's next teleconference is scheduled for February 2002, and the topic will be the PLUS Master Promissory Note (MPN).

TG'S LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

The October 24 edition of TG's Legislative Report includes an article about recent Congressional action relating to appropriations, economic stimulus, and ESEA Reauthorization. Other items of interest include information on a recent College Board report about college costs, financial aid, and grant-loan imbalances as well as an update on the Charley Wootan Grant Program. Find out more at www.tgscl.org/tgscl/publications/lege_report/2001/lr_011024.htm.

THIS, THAT, AND THE OTHER

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) recently released a report entitled "State of the Campus Environment" that indicates that college officials are increasingly taking environmental factors into consideration when making a variety of decisions. The report is based on a survey pertaining to environmental initiatives that was conducted at 891 of the nation's 4,100 colleges and universities. The survey suggests "that environmental programs fit with the culture and values on America's campuses." For more information on NWF's report, visit www.nwf.org/campusecology/tools/publications/stateofthecampus.html.

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