Lamont Campus Networking and Computing Services Assessment Policy

On July 1, 2003, we started to implement the computer services assessment plan that was introduced in August 2002. This memo is intended to review key elements of this plan and help answer the most commonly arising questions.

Under this plan, units of Columbia University with permanent facilities located on the Lamont campus are required to support their networking and computing needs through a fixed rate percentage fee charged against all transactions of the unit (with the exception of expenditures associated with Ship Support, Permanent Equipment, Subcontracts, or any other line specifically excluded from ICR by its terms of contract). This method for recovering computing expenses will be more equitable than the previous method of supporting computing services through a subscription paid only on Sun workstations. All revenue streams, not just government grants & contracts, are subject to the assessment fee.

Implementation:

All new grants & contracts (and other income) received by the Lamont campus Central Administration are now charged an assessment fee to help defray the costs of providing computing services to all on this campus. The assessment fee itself is not subject to ICR. In preparation for this policy implementation, a computing assessment line item has been budgeted into all proposals submitted through the Lamont Projects and Grants Office since August 2002. The attached table shows the only situations under which funding is exempted from the assessment.

The assessment fee is charged each time an expenditure is made against eligible line items in accounts that are processed through Lamont’s Central Administration. Any line item that is exempt from ICR under the contract is also exempt from the computer assessment charge.

Grandfathering:

Pre-existing awards with out-year increments beyond July 1 2003 will not be subject to the new computer assessment fees (unless such awards have been re-budgeted in accordance with the new plan). Such awards have been flagged by the Lamont administration. Where budgets in those awards include a computer subscription line item under the old scheme, those revenues will be collected automatically. Accounts for “grandfathered” increments that do not contain the old subscription line item will not be subjected to the new assessment charge. Note however, that supplements to, and renewals of, existing awards (i.e., requests for “new” funds) will be subject to the new assessment charge.
## Types of Awards Subject to Computer Network Assessment

### As of July 1, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Award</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Sponsored Research*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>*Except where prohibited by terms of award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcontracts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First $25K</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Parallels ICR policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Equipment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Support (Ewing)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSSP Cruise PO</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Only costs for PI salary allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSSP Post-Cruise Research</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Off Campus’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Awards &amp; Accounts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>All expenses subject to assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfathered Awards</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awards starting prior to January 1, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer subscription budgeted</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Will be assessed up to budgeted amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No computer budgeted</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>All “new” money requests are assessed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADDENDUM

Review of Service Rates

Currently, three levels of computing and networking support have been defined. The campus-wide Computing Oversight Committee will review the rates and service items annually and adjust them when warranted, keeping in mind that the budget-to-implementation cycle is two years.

Network Access (1% fee to non-LDEO units):

A rate for **Network Access** level of support has been established initially at 1%, and this assessment is levied on the non-LDEO units on campus.

This level of support provides only access to the Lamont campus computer network facilities, which include the routers, switches, hubs, firewalls, wireless links, telephone circuits, underground fiber and copper building wiring plant that make up the core general purpose facilities necessary to support state-of-the-art computing on the Lamont campus. Services include:

- design, installation, operation and maintenance of the core computing network and its connection to the Internet and Internet2.
- UPS backup for building network switches will be provided and maintained (building generator back-up comes from a different funding source).
- Some cross-EI unit A/V help will be provided.

The Heads of LDEO, CIESIN and the IRI have agreed that these services are to be provided under the Network Access category of the assessment plan.

Basic Computer Support (3% fee to all LDEO units):

A rate for **Basic Computer Support**, which includes network access, has been initially set at 3%, and it will be assessed on expenditures made by members of the Observatory.

This level of support includes all the services provided for Network Access plus the following additional services:

- Support for installation and configuration of approved hardware and operating systems,
- applications and utilities,
- desktop/laptop connection to the LDEO Network,
- help with installation, configuration and maintenance of security software, file system backup, printing, A/V presentations, proposal budgeting, peripheral hardware, computing purchases, and other traditional help desk functions
- Management of site-wide general-purpose software licenses.
- Design, installation, operation and maintenance of the servers necessary to deliver basic services such as email, web, news, calendar, local file servers, “public” printers and plotters, and network file service utilities (DNS, DHCP, LDAP, SMB, NFS, NIS, etc.) to the community.
- Operation and maintenance of the LDEO Mass Storage System.
- Technical support for A/V and teleconferencing equipment in seminar rooms and in the Monell auditorium.

Most of these services will be familiar to users who paid a computer subscription under the old revenue plan. The intent is to extend these services (as far as possible) to other approved hardware and operating systems.

**Special Projects:**

These are tasks not covered under the Network or Computer Support service plans described above because they are of a specific nature (for an individual or group) and are not of general interest or not necessary for the operation of the campus computing environment. **Special Projects** services will be charged directly to the appropriate research project.

Such tasks would include:

- contract or grant specific deliverables,
- web site development,
- desktop hardware maintenance,
- program writing or debugging,
- purchase, installation of or training on hardware or software of a specific nature, etc.

These services can be purchased on a fee-for-service basis as time and personnel permit. The Computing Oversight Committee has been charged with defining the boundary between services provided under the Basic Computer Support and the Special Projects categories.