The Silicon Ear
(with apologies to Linda Coughlin)
An occasional academic-computing newsletter for faculty and staff.

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With the Learning Systems Group
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HALP!
When should you call the Support Center (that's how they want us to refer to the help desk now) and what should you expect when you do? CTSS has drawn up a very complete description of this process that they call a "Level of Support" document, and you can find it at <http://www.smcm.edu/tech/levelofservice.cfm>

Briefly:
- Call the Support Center whenever you need help with anything related to information technology or campus telephone service.
- Expect your request to be assigned a priority. The priority will be based partly on how severe the problem is to you, but also how important it is to the campus as a whole. Like it or not, the network being   inaccessible is going to take priority over the blue screen of death on   your laptop, even if you need that laptop for a class that starts in ten minutes.
- Some requests will be handled by students, some by staff, and some by technicians; it all depends on the nature of the problem.
- Expect to describe the problem in detail, and don't get irritated if you're asked questions whose answers seem obvious. Let us tell you a tale on ourselves by way of illustration.

The other day, we'd just rushed back from a class where we used the laptop for a presentation, got the whole thing plugged back in on the desk, and then tried to print a handout for the next class. **&$%%#@ The networked printer down the hall simply was not responding. Went down the hall and turned the printer off and then on, checked for paper (full), no red lights… Hmmm… Tried again: nada. Breathlessly called the Help Desk and asked if the technician could stop by ASAP. Bob Brown showed up almost immediately. The first thing he did was to look pointedly at the side of the laptop where the network cable plugs in. Well, of course the network cable was plugged…into… the …. uh… Oh. Ummm… guess maybe that's why the printer wasn't responding, eh? With red face, we plugged in the network cable, printed the handout, and bade Bob a good afternoon. Moral: if

the Support Center person asks you if your computer is plugged in, don't fume and sputter, look to see whether it's plugged in!

Reorganization

Several faculty have asked to be reminded of how the Learning Systems Group (LSG) is being reorganized, and how the open positions will be filled. Linda Coughlin sent a memo to the department chairs late in the summer about this, but it was a while ago, and since then the people in the two Learning-Systems Specialist slots have moved on, so probably an update is in order. Recall that the LSG (Chris Mattia and Max Smith) reported to Linda Coughlin in the Provost's Office, while the technicians (Jeff Krissoff and Bob Brown) reported to Baron Rawlins in CTSS.

It became clear that the Learning-Systems Specialists and the Technicians should be together organizationally because they work together closely, and it would ease cross training of technicians, specialists, and especially faculty. With the larger reorganization that occurred after Michael Freeman's departure, substantial new responsibilities were added to the Provost's office, and so assigning the whole group to that office didn't seem to make sense. Therefore, they were put under CTSS. Here are the positions and their statuses:

- **Learning Technology Supervisor.** (Technically, a replacement for Max Smith's position) This is to be the head of the group, who will report to George Waggoner. The College made an offer for this position, and the offer was declined, so the search continues.
- **Learning Systems Specialist.** (Technically, a replacement for Chris Mattia's position) This person would report to the Learning Technology Supervisor. The precise definition of this position (and the search for it) await the hiring of the supervisor; it seems to make sense for the supervisor to help define the position he or she will be supervising. Together, the person in this position and the supervisor would do most of the higher-level things that Max Smith and Chris Mattia did: assisting faculty with technology adoption, advising about new technologies, creating training courses, being a liaison between the faculty and the rest of CTSS, and so on. Because these people will assist the entire faculty, their offices will be in Baltimore Hall. Linda Coughlin and your editor would continue to meet weekly with these two people.
- **Technicians (2).** These positions are currently filled by Bob Brown and Jeff Krissoff, who will report to the Learning Technology Supervisor. Their job is primarily to assist faculty and staff with current technology, but they will interact closely with the people in the other positions to do training and other tasks associated with new technology.

- **Students**. Everyone involved expects students to play a larger role in the overall technology-assistance plan in the future. The details are not clear yet, but both the Computer Science program and CTSS are working to develop a cadre of trained, experienced students to handle the Help-Desk telephones, check the in-class projectors, run the computing labs, and so on.

Input, Information, and Help Requested

- **Faculty/Staff Keyserver testers**. The keyserver has been tested in the Baltimore Hall Lab, and it's about to be installed in the Kent Hall Lab. We're looking for a Few Good Faculty and Staff who would like to volunteer to be early keyserver adopters; please get in touch with me, and we'll get you set up. Recall that a keyserver is a way to manage software licenses so that we only need to buy licenses for the number of people who might be using a piece of software simultaneously, not the total number of people who might ever use it.
- **Web Input**. The Web Committee is in the very earliest stages of designing how the faculty and staff pages will look, how the "audience buttons" for faculty and staff behave, and so on. If you have suggestions, favorite websites from other colleges, things you're sure you don't want to see, etc., get in touch with Lee Capristo <lwcapristo@smcm.edu> and let her know.
- **Go Easy on CTSS**. As noted above, we still have not filled the positions of Chris Mattia and Max Smith, and additionally Baron Rawlins has recently resigned. Baron very ably managed an increasingly complex campus network so well that hardly anyone noticed, and we wish him well but will miss him dearly. These resignations all involve highly personal decisions and do not reflect poorly on CTSS, but it's very unlikely that we'll be able to hire replacements during the Holidays. So CTSS is most likely going to be very shorthanded through the beginning of the spring semester. Please be creative, positive, and forbearing in your expectations. For example some of the Blackboard services we're used to may not happen, such as combining cross-listed courses or sections into a single course.
- If you know someone who is looking for a job in academic computing, don't hesitate to steer them our way! Job descriptions are on the web at <http://www.smcm.edu/services/personnel/employ_list.cfm?type=admin)>. Recruit!