AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM

Participation of Proprietary Schools in MOREnet
Coordinating Board for Higher Education
February 7, 2002

DESCRIPTION

The Missouri Research and Education Network (MOREnet) provides a high-speed state telecommunications network to higher education institutions, elementary and secondary schools, public libraries, state agencies, and other organizations and government agencies. The higher education institutions that receive services provided through the University of Missouri by MOREnet belong to the Missouri Education and Research Consortium (MERC), an organization aimed at advancing the collaborative use of networked technology and applications in higher education, research, and public service and at working together to share resources for the benefit of all consortium members. The intent of this board item is to establish a policy framework for decisions about proprietary school use of MOREnet services.

MOREnet received its first dedicated state appropriation of $5 million in FY98 to connect to the Internet and to expand and strengthen its infrastructure. The Coordinating Board has consistently approved additional funding recommendations for MOREnet to provide continued growth and support of its services for all member institutions. Becoming a MOREnet customer has benefits for participating institutions, above and beyond Internet connectivity, through the state's backbone. MOREnet members are eligible to participate in MOREnet-sponsored training and to have the benefit of MOREnet consultants as part of their user-services fee.

Although one proprietary institution, Sanford Brown College, receives MOREnet services, additional proprietary institutions have not been given access to MOREnet. Sanford Brown College was among the first group of college and universities to affiliate with MOREnet, and its relationship to MOREnet and involvement in MERC have been maintained. An additional request to join MOREnet from another proprietary institution was denied because a clear, consistent policy at the state level had not been established. MOREnet referred the matter to the CBHE to review and recommend guidelines for an appropriate policy framework involving the participation of additional proprietary institutions in MOREnet. Since the University of Missouri has fiduciary and legal responsibility for MOREnet, its funding requests are treated under UM Related Programs. Consequently, UM legal counsel is currently reviewing the proposed guidelines for proprietary school participation in MOREnet.

At its October 2, 2001 meeting, the Committee on Technology and Instruction (CTI) discussed the issue of proprietary institutional interest in securing MOREnet services. CTI members acknowledged that proprietary institutions provide education and training to an increasing

number of Missouri citizens and that proprietary institutions have been included in other important statewide postsecondary education activities. CTI proposed a set of policy guidelines for participation of proprietary schools in MOREnet while acknowledging that all MOREnet policies be developed within the context of state law.

CTI developed a set of eligibility guidelines for participation in MOREnet. CTI recommends that participating proprietary institutions meet the following criteria:

- Accredited
- Missouri-based
- Degree-granting
- Certified by the CBHE Proprietary School Certification program.

Accreditation by national or regional accrediting organizations is one way to ensure the quality of students' educational experiences. In order to maintain a high level of service for current MOREnet participants, CTI recommends that participation be limited to Missouri-based institutions. A "Missouri-based" institution is one that has been operating in Missouri for at least fifty years or whose main campus is located in Missouri. Participating institutions will grant degrees at the associate level or above in keeping with MOREnet's origins as a network to serve the education and research needs of Missouri's higher education institutions. Certification by the CBHE Proprietary School Certification program provides the consumer with an additional level of protection on the quality and value of the education provided by a proprietary school.

CTI also recommends guidelines for the fees charged to proprietary schools that elect to receive MOREnet services. Since MOREnet is supported in part with state funds, any policy framework involving proprietary institutions should establish fee structures that ensure recovery of the full cost of MOREnet services. This includes a member services fee, based on institutional enrollment, as well as the local circuit and equipment charges associated with connecting to the MOREnet backbone. A proprietary institution would also be assessed for its share of the MOREnet infrastructure, which includes access to the state backbone, Internet services, network operations, and other related costs.

STATUTORY REFERENCE

Section 173.020(2), RSMo, CBHE statutory responsibility to identify higher education needs in the state in terms of development of a labor force enabling the development of commerce and industry

Section 173.020(4), RSMo, CBHE statutory responsibility to design a coordinated plan for higher education in the state

Sections 173.600 to 173.619, RSMo, CBHE statutory responsibility to oversee and certify proprietary schools

RELATED BOARD POLICY

Coordinating Board for Higher Education **Public Policies Affecting the Missouri Higher Education Delivery System**

Chapter VII: Instructional Technology and Telecommunications
F: Missouri Research and Education Network (MOREnet) (*Established in 1990)*
I: Appointment of CBHE Advisory Committee on Technology and Instruction (CTI) (*Established by the board on October 8, 1998)*
Chapter X: Proprietary School Certification

CONSULTATIONS AND RELATED BOARD MEETING ITEMS

This agenda item summary is based on the work of CBHE staff, the CBHE Advisory Committee on Technology and Instruction (CTI), the Proprietary School Advisory Committee, and MOREnet senior staff.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Coordinating Board for Higher Education approve that proprietary schools meeting the following conditions be eligible for consideration to access MOREnet services.

- **The proprietary institution expresses an interest in receiving MOREnet services.**
- **The proprietary institution is accredited by a recognized regional or national accrediting organization.**
- **The proprietary institution grants degrees at the associate level or above.**
- **The proprietary institution has been operating in Missouri for at least fifty years or whose main campus is located in Missouri.**
- **The proprietary institution has been certified by the Coordinating Board's Proprietary School Certification program.**

Furthermore, it is recommended that the fee structures established for proprietary schools given access to MOREnet services ensure at least the recovery of the full cost for these services.

ATTACHMENT

None