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UD Announces Purchase of Advanced Telecommunications System

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DAYTON, Ohio, November 26, 1984 -- The University of Dayton will make another connection with advanced technology next fall when a new $3 million digital telephone system is scheduled to be in operation.

According to M. Daniel Henry, Ph.D., vice president for administration, "the need for a new telephone system was anticipated years ago" and the decision to go with Northern Telecom's SL-1XN system was made following an extensive 1-1/2-year study conducted by a specially formed Telecommunications Task Force.

The system is being purchased through Ohio Bell and a contract signing is scheduled for Wednesday, November 28. "We're not talking about an old-fashioned phone system but a sophisticated computer network," said Henry. "The involvement of the UD Office of Computing Activities is vital to our success."

Also assisting the task force was a professional consultant, Jerico Telecommunications, which helped design the system and prepare a Request for Proposal which was submitted to eight vendors, six of which responded with bids.

The task force listed three main objectives to its mission:

1. to control the cost of telephone service on campus over the long term;
2. to improve the quality of the telephone system; and

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3. to allow for the use of the system in data communications (networking).

In its September 14, 1984, report to the president, the task force stated that the cost of the existing "Centrex-CU System has been increasing at a rate of 12 percent a year and that the service level has been reduced, particularly for student long distance calls." The report also stated that the existing system is difficult to repair, with many service parts going out of production five years ago.

Deteriorating cables connecting buildings are also a problem, said the task force, and with the existing system "simultaneous voice and data transmission will never be possible."

The new system has the capability for integrated voice-data switching which will enable it to handle data as well as voice transmissions. "This will definitely facilitate data transmission on our campus," says Ronald McAdams, director of Computing Activities at UD.

Depending on final costs and the repayment procedures that the University chooses, the new system should pay for itself in seven to 10 years. The biggest cost savings comes from the "freeze on equipment costs," said Henry. "Once we buy the system we don't have to worry about rate increases on equipment."

The University will own and operate the system, which comes with a one-year maintenance-free warranty. The decision as to whether UD or Ohio Bell will maintain the equipment after a year will be made after further analysis.

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As well as voice-data switching, the new system is also capable of call forwarding, call waiting, automatic redial, and several other memory features. All long distance calls will be handled by a computer feature called Least Cost Routing. The computer will place calls using the least expensive route available at the time of the call; watts lines will be chosen whenever possible.

The University's Board of Trustees approved the system's purchase at its October 19 meeting. Henry said, "The choice of Ohio Bell Communications was based on cost, flexibility, and the desire to maintain the excellent working relationship developed over the years."

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