

Technology Policy and Planning Group (TPPG)
Ad Hoc Task Group on Universal Waste Regulation Proposal
Final Recommendations

The Task Group met on June 5, 2003 to review the Proposed Procedure, consider administrative implications, authority and oversight responsibility and time-table for action in order to frame and forward the following advice to the TPPG. The Task Group finds that TPPG should generally support the Proposal and TPPG should recommend modifications to the Proposal.

Summary Advice

1. There is great value to a procedural frame work comprised of Education, Purchasing and Disposal. Of these three, Education deserves the most and immediate attention.
2. The fee-for-service proposal provides well intended incentives, but controls buying behavior through increased cost at the departmental level.
3. Reallocating renovation and construction budgets for disposal of Universal Waste may cause compromises to the scope of construction projects that adversely effect UNH programs over the long-term.
4. There is great value and some incremental costs associated with procurement of environmentally friendly technologies and recycling of discarded technologies that warrant careful consideration.

Recommendations

1. There is great value to a procedural frame work comprised of Education, Purchasing and Disposal. Of these three, Education deserves the most and immediate attention.

A. EDUCATION

TPPG should support the offices of Environmental Health and Safety, Computer and Information Services, Sustainability and Purchasing join together to develop an education initiative targeting the University community. The program should define Universal Waste, the nature of the hazard to the environment, introduce State regulation of this waste stream, identify technologies with the least adverse effect on the environment, define the useful life cycles of each component of the desk top computer (CPU, monitor, key board, printer), and prescribe methods of upgrading the desk top computing environment in a manner that REDUCES the waste stream to the extent possible. The education program may also inform community members of the proper procedures to erase or delete all files/software prior to disposing of equipment.

B. PURCHASING

TPPG should support Purchasing Office efforts to explore opportunities within the market for so called product take back agreements, leasing agreements, and source the most economical environmentally friendly product lines. Such opportunities may be introduced through the Universal Waste education program.

C. DISPOSAL

TPPG should encourage CIS to explore repair and recycle programs as an alternate and less costly approach to meeting UNH departmental computing needs that may be less demanding and easily met with dated technology.

TPPG should support a new emphasis within the existing Surplus Property program administered through the Purchasing Office. New emphasis may be placed on selling used equipment to employees at a cost equal to or less than disposal costs; conduct auctions for used equipment; and connect with public primary and secondary educational institutions to transfer title of used computer equipment. In all instances of such transfers, programmatic efforts need be in place to 'sanitize' the memory of primary storage devices to erase all files and software for which no license is in hand, and provide all related licenses associated with all software remaining on primary storage devices.

2. The fee-for-service proposal provides well intended incentives, but controls buying behavior through increased cost at the departmental level.

The Universal Waste regulation has created an institutional challenge and obligation, particularly as it relates to the build-up of discarded technology cluttering closets, classrooms and office spaces throughout campus. TPPG should advocate that the financial burden be equally distributed throughout the UNH community. Placing the burden at the departmental level creates pleas for Amnesty and may result in violations of the regulation as departments seek ways to avoid such costs.

TPPG should support an institutionally based funding solution to address the problem that insures full compliance with the regulation and thereby avoids potentially onerous consequences in the event of violations of State regulations. Ideally, the Central Budget Committee (CBC) would consider the need and recommend allocating new revenues to the Environmental Health and Safety Office to address the need. In the absence of new revenues, the CBC may also recommend reallocating existing revenues for this purpose through a combination of the Academic Affairs and General Overhead Assessments within the RCM set of practices. This approach will be less costly to the community. Administering the Environmental Health and Safety expense budget is less costly than the accounts receivable and accounts payable activity between a single BSC and every department on campus that deploys computer technology. This approach ensures heightened awareness of the Universal Waste demands on campus to each RC Unit and other central governance authorities.

3. Reallocating renovation and construction budgets for disposal of Universal Waste may cause compromises to the scope of construction projects that adversely effect UNH programs over the long-term.

The TPPG should advocate against reducing construction related appropriations for the purpose of supporting disposal costs. Such funding is difficult to acquire and when appropriations are received by UNH they often are insufficient to meet the total need to improve existing facilities or construct new buildings in keeping with the total need of the UNH programs served. Reallocating a portion of such funds for disposal costs will only serve to further compromise the institution over the long term.

4. There is great value and some incremental costs associated with procurement of environmentally friendly technologies and recycling of discarded technologies that warrant careful consideration.

The TPPG should advocate further study of the incremental costs associated with recycling equipment that would otherwise be disposed. TPPG should recommend that CIS study and report on the cost of receiving, storing and handling title transfer of surplus property in order to determine the feasibility of such a program. TPPG should recommend that the office of Sustainability search for grant funding in support of a repair and recycling program that reduces the stream of Universal Waste otherwise headed for land fills.