Letter to CHE  
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In his article dated February 10, 2006 Terry Hartle of the American Council on Education correctly pointed out that applying CALEA requirements to higher education networks is not in the public interest because the potentially huge costs far outweigh the additional benefits.

An equally burdensome, long-term problem could be the dampening effect of CALEA on innovation. Requiring equipment on every campus to conform to particular configurations and procedures for the purposes of automating wiretapping will constrain the entrepreneurial innovation that has characterized campus networking in the past, and that has contributed to the rapid evolution of the Internet at large. This innovation, as an engine of technological and economic competitiveness, is an important national asset in its own right.

As noted by Andrea Foster in her article of March 10, the FCC has since argued in a court brief that campuses must comply with CALEA only at the point where the campus network interconnects with the public Internet. My note of caution in that article reflects the fact that we still do not know what additional investments and procedures might be required throughout a campus to comply with CALEA at the point of interconnection. The FCC has yet to define compliance.

Many colleges and associations have joined the higher education protest against the new CALEA requirements by filing comments with the FCC. You can see them all at www.educause.edu/calea.

Best regards,

Mark Luker, Vice President
EDUCAUSE