



INDIANA HIGHER EDUCATION
TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM
(IHETS)

*A consortium of Indiana's public and
independent colleges and universities*

2007-09 Appropriations Request

Presented to the

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

March 13, 2007

Presentation Narrative

Interim Director Dr. William Kramer

*Thank you President Benjamin.

*Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, on behalf of the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System consortium I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present our budget request for the 2007-09 biennium.

*As Dr. Benjamin indicated I retired last year from Ivy Tech as Vice President for Academic Affairs for the Ivy Tech system. In the 30 plus years I have had the opportunity to serve Indiana higher education in positions at the Commission for Higher Education and Ivy Tech, I have almost always been associated with IHETS. In this interim position, I do not present myself as an expert in IHETS matters but have with me people whom I will defer to for assistance as needed.

*Our presentation will briefly touch on the 10 exhibits that are on the right side of your folder pocket. On the left side pocket you will see an outline identifying the exhibits along with some additional information.

*In presenting our request, I have attempted to address the questions that we have been given by the Committee's staff. Please stop me at any time if there is a point you would like us to comment on further.

***Exhibit I** shows the governance structure including the standing committees of the board, Board representation includes presidents, vice presidents, and chancellors of the public and independent higher education institutions, the superintendent of public instruction, a representative of the public broadcast stations, and a representative for the public libraries. Recent legislation added the director of the Indiana Office of Technology to the board.

***Exhibit II** shows the higher education member institutions and identifies the affiliate members, as we refer to them. We have 38 college and university members representing approximately 70 campuses across the state. The numbers of public and independent campuses represented are about equal.

***Exhibit III** shows the state government entities that use our multimedia services. All three branches, legislative, judicial, and executive branch agencies are represented.

*Created by Public Law 20-12-12 in 1967 and amended in subsequent years, the university consortium, later named IHETS, was to establish a multipurpose, multi-media, closed circuit telecommunications system and to establish programs in electronic format using the most appropriate technological medium. Authorization was given to permit other entities such as governmental or public corporations or bodies to use the telecommunications system. Enabling legislation is shown in **Exhibit IV**.

Following the intent of its legislation, the IHETS mission is:

To use technology for the improvement and advancement of higher education opportunity--increasing and expanding access for students and lifelong learners and enhancing p-20 teaching, learning, and collaboration. IHETS will provide and support the use of its multi-media technologies for other affiliates as specified in its legislation.

*For the past 40 years IHETS has had an outstanding record of performance in large part due to the inter-institutional cooperation and sharing that has been the cornerstone of the consortium. Expertise brought to the table has enabled new network and multimedia technologies to be identified, pilot tested and implemented full scale, replacing old technologies for new ones that were more effective and cost efficient. In the e-learning service area, a service area that grew stronger in the early 1990's, distance education course transfer among the member institutions, cross registration of students in distance education courses, and agreements for course payments and financial aid among institutions were worked out by member representatives with management and ongoing technical support for the services coming from the IHETS staff. These and other accomplishments are shown in **Exhibit V**.

*This past February, through a memorandum of understanding between the State Budget Agency and Indiana and Purdue Universities, responsibility for constructing and operating a high speed data network using fiber optic technology was assigned by the Governor to those two institutions. The network is referred to as the I-Light 2 network. The previous wire circuit based high speed network was operated by IHETS from 1995 through mid-year 2006. As of January 1, 2007 IHETS has transferred responsibility, including staff and other resources, for the circuit based network to Indiana University to be merged with the fiber optic network. Through a memorandum of understanding between IU and PU and the IHETS Board, IHETS will serve as an oversight/advisory board for I-Light 2.

***Exhibit VI** shows the multimedia and e-learning services currently supported by IHETS minus responsibility for operating the high speed data network. One of these services, our audio-video streaming service is ready to be operationalized to broadcast the proceedings of this committee. In fact, you can see the cameras mounted in this room.

***Exhibit VII** shows some usage metrics for eight of the services currently supported.

*Over the years, your support, for both network, multimedia technology, and e-learning services invaluable in enabling our members and affiliates to expand access to educational opportunity as well as to assist others in the conduct of the public's business and to do so while receiving a high quality of service and cost savings.

***Exhibit VIII** shows the history of state appropriations for IHETS. The trend is not too dissimilar to that of many others showing the amounts has been falling over the last several biennia. Through staff reductions, and other cost savings, the organization has managed to maintain most of its services.

***Exhibit IX** shows the IHETS budget request as approved by the Board in June, 2006. The state appropriation amounts requested are \$4.8 million for 2008, and \$4.9 million for 2009. Of these amounts, approximately \$1 million, is budgeted for continued support of the high speed data network (now operated by IU) and of the remaining amounts approximately two-thirds is budgeted to support the multimedia technology services with the remaining one-third budgeted for the e-learning services.

***In Exhibit X** we have provided a record of the recommendations made thus far on the IHETS budget request. You will note the Commission for Higher Education supported the full amount requested; the Governor's recommendations reduced the amounts by \$2 million each year and concurrently allocated \$2 million each year to Indiana University for support of the high speed network. The House recommended the full amount of operating funds requested by IHETS, and, in addition, recommended \$9 million for member campuses to connect to the fiber optic network.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, on behalf of the consortium, we ask for your continued support of our operations and the network. We thank you for your time and would be happy to answer any questions.