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ASHEVILLE-BUNCOMBE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

February 16, 2001

Chairman Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College has applied to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for an ITFS (Instructional Television Fixed Service) license for which FCC approval is currently pending. We have been working for over five (5) years and invested significant funds to secure our license, along with 38 other North Carolina Community Colleges, in an effort to establish a statewide wireless network in support of education and training delivery for our citizens.

Securing this license and establishing this educational wireless network is particularly important to our college, which is located in Western North Carolina where other data transmission infrastructure is severely limited due to the rural nature of the area. Without this wireless network, our ability to deliver educational services to the citizens of our area will be severely limited and adversely impacted. We have been working toward the development of this network for years as the integral part of our plans to use technology to effectively deliver educational services to the members of our community through distance learning programs and collaborative programs with neighboring educational institutions. This network is a vital component of our efforts to overcome the digital divide that threatens to segregate our communities.

Our planned wireless system will be used to deliver curriculum and continuing education courses and workshops to business and industry, government agencies, municipal offices, health care agencies, law enforcement agencies, emergency services agencies, and secondary and other post-secondary educational institutions within our region. We have expended considerable resources in program planning and development over the past five years in anticipation of the completion of this wireless network. The proposed system will provide the infrastructure for economical connectivity among existing institutions and support the expansion of program delivery to rural and remote areas that do not at the present time have high-speed data connectivity.

It has come to our attention that other interests such as 3-G are attempting to acquire the frequencies that we are requesting be allocated for the ITFS system. To allocate these frequencies for purposes other than

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ITFS would needlessly imperil one of our most important technological resources for educational delivery and outreach to the members of our community. There are other frequencies that could accommodate 3-G, while protecting our citizens' access to information and educational programs by reserving the requested frequencies for ITFS.

We strongly oppose any attempt to re-allocate or subdivide the frequencies requested for ITFS, and urge you to consider carefully both the opportunity we have for a comprehensive educational network if ITFS remains intact; as well as the cost to our citizens if the frequencies are squandered and we fail to capitalize on this opportunity to create a seamless web of lifelong learning. ITFS is an essential part of our College's educational delivery strategy for the future and will play a key role in workforce preparedness for our citizens and the economic development of our region.

We urge your careful attention to this matter, and ask for your assistance in retaining the ITFS frequencies for use in educational delivery through our statewide educational consortium.

Sincerely,

K. Ray Bailey
President

cc Peter A. Tenhula, Senior Legal Advisor