

PRESERVE ITFS SPECTRUM FOR EDUCATION

May 26, 2004

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

RE: WT Docket No. 03-66

Educational institutions throughout the United States for many decades have used Instructional Television Fixed Service (“ITFS”) channels in the 2.5 GHz band to transmit instructional programming to students at all levels, from grade school through graduate school to the workplace. The allocation of ITFS spectrum for educational purposes was a wise and forward-thinking decision of the FCC in the 1960’s. We are proud that many of our member institutions have been among the pioneers in the ITFS band.

Millions of learners across the country rely on ITFS for access to critical educational services including interactive instruction, distance education, electronic field trips, job site training and other services. As the cost of education and training continues to increase in a difficult budgetary era, the resources that institutions can provide through ITFS systems are essential in keeping the quality of education high, and ensuring that every learner has access to the resources necessary to excel.

ITFS is the only spectrum specifically allocated to formal education, and we are writing to request your support in protecting this vital educational asset. As the FCC updates the technical rules for ITFS to more effectively support a range of new broadband services, **we urge you to reject proposals to allow any ITFS spectrum to be sold to commercial entities, or to reduce the total amount of spectrum allocated to ITFS.** Loss of the spectrum would be a terrible blow to education. In this regard, we emphatically disagree with the eligibility position taken by NITV in a recent *ex parte* filing in this proceeding. NITV is an ITFS licensee that is, of course, free to advocate whatever position best serves its corporate interests. However, it is not an educational institution, and it certainly does not speak for ITFS licensees or the education community in the United States who firmly believe that such a change likely would cripple ITFS as an educational tool.

The possibilities for future development of educational services in the ITFS band are exciting. Our ITFS member institutions plan to use this spectrum to the fullest extent in the years ahead after the adoption of the new technical rules. But these efforts could be fatally jeopardized if the spectrum is opened up to commercial entities or is reduced in

size. Therefore, we ask that you will support keeping this valuable educational resource from being reduced or licensed for commercial use. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association of Public Television Stations
Internet2
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
University Continuing Education Association

CC: Commissioner Abernathy
Commissioner Adelstein
Commissioner Copps
Commissioner Martin
John B. Muleta

The *American Association of Community Colleges* is the primary advocacy organization for community colleges at the national level. AACC's membership represents close to 95 percent of all accredited U.S. two-year community, junior and technical colleges and their 10.5 million students.

The *American Association of State Colleges and Universities* represents more than 430 public colleges, universities and systems of higher education throughout the United States and its territories. AASCU schools enroll more than 3 million students or 56 percent of the enrollment at all public four-year institutions.

The *American Council on Education* is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions. It seeks to provide leadership and a unifying voice on key higher education issues and to influence public policy through advocacy, research, and program initiatives. Its members include approximately 1,800 accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities and higher education-related associations, organizations, and corporations.

The *Association of Public Television Stations* is a nonprofit membership organization that supports the continued growth and development of a strong and financially sound noncommercial television service for the American public. APTS provides advocacy for public television interests at the national level, as well as consistent leadership and information in marshaling support for its members: the nation's public television stations.

Internet2 is a consortium being led by 206 universities working in partnership with industry and government to develop and deploy advanced network applications and technologies, accelerating the creation of tomorrow's Internet. Internet2 is recreating the partnership among academia, industry and government that fostered today's Internet in its infancy.

The *National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges* is the nation's oldest higher education association. A voluntary association of public universities, land-grant institutions and many of the nation's public university systems, NASULGC campuses are located in all 50 states, the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. As of February 2004, the association's membership stood at 212 institutions. This includes 76 land-grant universities, of which 17 are the historically black public institutions created by the Second Morrill Act of 1890, and 27 public higher education systems. In addition, tribal colleges became land-grant institutions in 1994 and 31 are represented in NASULGC through the membership of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

The *University Continuing Education Association* is among the oldest college and university associations in the United States. As the principal US organization for continuing higher education, the Association assists institutions of higher learning and affiliated nonprofit organizations to increase access through a wide array of educational programs and services.