Credit Card Principle Guidelines

Our customers want to order and pay for UCR goods or services via the web using a credit card. Accepting on-line payments not only pleases our customers, but also has the potential to save direct labor costs for our campus departments, shorten (or eliminate) lines of people waiting to pay for services, and increase revenue.

But accepting electronic payments via the Internet is a somewhat risky process. The electronic payment process is inherently complex and segmented. The industry has not yet standardized itself so there is a wide range of technology approaches, making it difficult for central IT staff to support several types of e-commerce interfaces. A variety of third party players can become involved, some with empty promises and short lifelines. And there is significant potential for improper handling or hacker pursuit of electronic credit and debit card numbers, along with payment fraud.

To help guide the policies and processes, the Financial Systems Steering Committee (FSSC) has adopted the following basic guidelines:

a. One oversight group will exist with two thrusts: (1) technical oversight (with staff from C&C on web server and network security), and (2) business process oversight (with staff from the Accounting Office, Student Business Services, Financial Control & Accountability, Audit & Advisory Services, and Academic Planning & Budget). This group will develop specific guidelines for departments wanting to engage in e-commerce.

b. Secure e-business computer systems and network links will be required throughout the process. For e-business web servers at the department level, this will likely include firewalls and other network security methods, operating system lock down controls and encryption.

c. Trained and experienced technical and operational staff will be required to be involved in the departmental level processes.

d. Given the risks and limited resources, we will standardize on one central campus Internet payment gateway hosted by Computing & Communications, linked to a single third party processor (Cybersource) who will provide credit card approval and do fund transfers to the banks. There may be certain limited exceptional circumstances where we need to use a non-standard third party processor or Internet payment gateway. Contracts for these services will be considered with viable, capable, and proven third party e-commerce vendors that have been approved by the oversight committee.

e. The indirect costs of implementing the electronic payment process are measurable, and funding schemes will be needed to help cover those costs incurred in the central departments. These funding approaches might consist of charging self-supporting enterprises for central department staff time, charging departments a transaction fee for using the gateway, etc.

Approved by FSSC 11/18/02