Power Conservation Committee
Final Report

The Power Conservation subcommittee of the MTU System Administration Council was charged with the review of the recommendations proposed by Facilities Management for computer power usage. The recommendations proposed several tiers of energy savings through progressive enabling of power saving features pre-existing in the installed computer base. The possibility of mandating that computers be turned off at night was included in the most aggressive tier.

Three meetings were held to discuss the recommendations and other possible options that might reduce power usage on campus. After reviewing the recommendations the committee felt the system administrators on campus had already implemented many of them.

Surveys were sent to all system administrators on campus concerning their power conservation policies. Responses to the survey accounted for 66% of computers under campus control. Of the nearly 2000 computers in the responses only 4 did not have a form of power conservation. The survey confirmed the estimation of the committee that power saving features are already in place at Michigan Tech. The results of the survey also invalidates many of the assumptions made in the recommendations, with the result that the savings the recommendation was supposed to achieve can be expected to be orders of magnitude less than stated.

The committee would also like to state that it is common practice to perform system administrative nighttime operations, taking advantage of the lull in computing activity at that time. A mandate to turn machines off at night would severely damage our ability to manage the computer systems we are responsible for and or inconvenience our user base.

We feel that drafting power conservation guidelines would be a good choice, especially for the dorms. However the committee believes no significant savings will be realized in forcing a blanket policy onto campus. Several other power saving alternatives were also looked into but the diversity of use and equipment in the campus network inhibits the effectiveness of the techniques.