





ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges: Tabulation of Responses by Number of Students and Employees Served, and by LEC-7

How does your local exchange carrier (LEC) typically handle unauthorized charges you bring to their attention?

	Students Receiving Telecom Services					Fulltime Equivalent Faculty/Staff				Local Exchange Carrier						
	TOTAL	Less than 900	900-1,599	1,600-3,199	3,200 or More	Less than 400	400-699	700-1,999	2,000 or More	Ameri-Tech	Bell Atlantic	Bell South	GTE	SW Bell	USWest	All Others
Number Reporting	188	37	37	42	41	46	43	43	45	25	55	16	14	15	21	41
Removes charge without question	32 17%	4 11%	6 16%	8 19%	6 15%	7 15%	7 16%	7 16%	9 20%	-	12 22%	3 19%	1 7%	2 13%	3 14%	11 27%
Advises contact responsible vendor	78 41%	19 51%	15 41%	19 45%	11 27%	20 43%	18 42%	21 49%	14 31%	15 60%	18 33%	5 31%	8 57%	7 47%	12 57%	13 32%
Will credit us if vendor does not	28 15%	6 16%	5 14%	6 14%	6 15%	5 11%	11 26%	6 14%	5 11%	5 20%	9 16%	2 13%	3 21%	1 7%	4 19%	4 10%
Refuses to credit us all circumstances	1 1%	-	-	-	-	1 2%	-	-	-	-	1 2%	-	-	-	-	-
Other outcome	23 12%	4 11%	5 14%	4 10%	9 22%	4 9%	3 7%	4 9%	10 22%	3 12%	6 11%	4 25%	-	2 13%	1 5%	7 17%
Not reported	26 14%	4 11%	6 16%	5 12%	9 22%	9 20%	4 9%	5 12%	7 16%	2 8%	9 16%	2 13%	2 14%	3 20%	1 5%	6 15%

ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges: Tabulation of Responses by Number of Students and Employees Served, and by LEC-8

If your LEC advises you to contact responsible vendor, without any other suggested alternative, can you usually reach the vendor?

	Students Receiving Telecom Services					Fulltime Equivalent Faculty/Staff					Local Exchange Carrier					
	TOTAL	Less than 900	900-1,599	1,600-3,199	3,200 or More	Less than 400	400-699	700-1,999	2,000 or More	Ameri-Tech	Bell Atlantic	Bell South	GTE	SW Bell	USWest	All Others
Number Reporting	78	19	15	19	11	20	18	21	14	15	18	5	8	7	12	13
Yes	60 77%	19 100%	9 60%	13 68%	10 91%	15 75%	14 78%	17 81%	10 71%	13 87%	14 78%	5 100%	6 75%	4 57%	9 75%	9 69%
No	14 18%	-	5 33%	5 26%	-	3 15%	4 22%	4 19%	2 14%	2 13%	3 17%	-	2 25%	2 29%	1 8%	4 31%
Not reported	4 5%	-	1 7%	1 5%	1 9%	2 10%	-	-	2 14%	-	1 6%	-	-	1 14%	2 17%	-

Does the vendor generally give you a satisfactory explanation of the charges?

Number Reporting	78	19	15	19	11	20	18	21	14	15	18	5	8	7	12	13
Yes, always	1 1%	-	-	1 5%	-	-	-	1 5%	-	-	1 6%	-	-	-	-	-
Yes, most of the time	25 32%	7 37%	5 33%	8 42%	3 27%	10 50%	4 22%	6 29%	5 36%	7 47%	4 22%	1 20%	6 75%	2 29%	3 25%	2 15%
About half the time	30 38%	8 42%	7 47%	5 26%	5 45%	7 35%	9 50%	8 38%	5 36%	7 47%	8 44%	2 40%	1 13%	3 43%	6 50%	3 23%
Not usually	16 21%	3 16%	1 7%	4 21%	2 18%	1 5%	4 22%	6 29%	3 21%	1 7%	4 22%	2 40%	1 13%	1 14%	3 25%	4 31%
No, almost never	4 5%	1 5%	1 7%	1 5%	1 9%	1 5%	1 6%	-	1 7%	-	1 6%	-	-	-	-	3 23%
Not reported	2 3%	-	1 7%	-	-	1 5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 14%	-	1 8%

ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges: Tabulation of Responses by Number of Students and Employees Served, and by LEC-9

Does the vendor generally resolve the problem to your satisfaction?

	Students Receiving Telecom Services					Fulltime Equivalent Faculty/Staff				Local Exchange Carrier						
	TOTAL	Less than 900	900-1,599	1,600-3,199	3,200 or More	Less than 400	400-699	700-1,999	2,000 or More	Ameri-Tech	Bell Atlantic	Bell South	GIF	SW Bell	USWest	All Others
Number Reporting	78	19	15	19	11	20	18	21	14	15	18	5	8	7	12	13
Yes, most of the time	36 46%	13 68%	6 40%	8 42%	4 36%	12 60%	6 33%	11 52%	6 43%	10 67%	7 39%	3 60%	5 63%	3 43%	3 25%	5 38%
About half the time	28 36%	5 26%	5 33%	7 37%	3 27%	6 30%	7 39%	7 33%	5 36%	5 33%	7 39%	2 40%	2 25%	2 29%	5 42%	5 38%
Not usually	12 15%	1 5%	3 20%	4 21%	4 36%	1 5%	5 28%	3 14%	3 21%	-	4 22%	-	1 13%	1 14%	4 33%	2 15%
Not reported	2 3%	-	1 7%	-	-	1 5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 14%	-	1 8%

ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges: Tabulation of Responses by Number of Students and Employees Served, and by LEC-10

If you dispute a charge, how many months does it generally take for the disputed charge to be removed from your telephone bill?

	Students Receiving Telecom Services					Fulltime Equivalent Faculty/Staff				Local Exchange Carrier						
	TOTAL	Less than 900	900-1,599	1,600-3,199	3,200 or More	Less than 400	400-699	700-1,999	2,000 or More	Ameri-Tech	Bell Atlantic	Bell South	GTE	SW Bell	USwest	All Others
Number Reporting	188	37	37	42	41	46	43	43	45	25	55	16	14	15	21	41
1-2 months	55 29%	12 32%	9 24%	9 21%	11 27%	17 37%	9 21%	15 35%	12 27%	8 32%	15 27%	7 44%	2 14%	4 27%	4 19%	15 37%
3-4 months	79 42%	19 51%	20 54%	19 45%	12 29%	20 43%	20 47%	17 40%	16 36%	13 52%	28 51%	4 25%	8 57%	5 33%	9 43%	12 29%
5-6 months	7 4%	1 3%	2 5%	2 5%	2 5%	3 7%	2 5%	1 2%	1 2%	1 4%	1 2%	2 13%	1 7%	-	1 5%	1 2%
More than 6 months	5 3%	-	-	2 5%	2 5%	-	2 5%	1 2%	2 4%	-	-	-	-	2 13%	2 10%	1 2%
Length of time varies; no pattern	21 11%	1 3%	2 5%	5 12%	11 27%	1 2%	5 12%	5 12%	9 20%	2 8%	8 15%	2 13%	1 7%	-	3 14%	5 12%
Not reported	21 11%	4 11%	4 11%	5 12%	3 7%	5 11%	5 12%	4 9%	5 11%	1 4%	3 5%	1 6%	2 14%	4 27%	2 10%	7 17%

ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges: Tabulation of Responses by Number of Students and Employees Served, and by LEC-11

Have you complained formally to a regulatory agency regarding unauthorized charges?

	Students Receiving Telecom Services					Fulltime Equivalent Faculty/Staff				Local Exchange Carrier						
	TOTAL	less than 900	900-1,599	1,600-3,199	3,200 or More	less than 400	400-699	700-1,999	2,000 or More	Ameri-Tech	Bell Atlantic	Bell South	GTE	SW Bell	USWest	All Others
Number Reporting	188	37	37	42	41	46	43	43	45	25	55	16	14	15	21	41
Yes	17 9%	3 8%	6 16%	3 7%	4 10%	4 9%	5 12%	4 9%	4 9%	2 8%	4 7%	2 13%	1 7%	3 20%	1 5%	4 10%
No	158 84%	31 84%	29 78%	37 88%	35 85%	37 80%	35 81%	38 88%	38 84%	23 92%	49 89%	14 88%	10 71%	10 67%	20 95%	32 78%
Not reported	13 7%	3 8%	2 5%	2 5%	2 5%	5 11%	3 7%	1 2%	3 7%	- -	2 4%	- -	3 21%	2 13%	- -	5 12%
If so, who did you complain to?																
Number Reporting	17	3	6	3	4	4	5	4	4	2	4	2	1	3	1	4
Federal Communica- tions Commission	5 29%	1 33%	1 17%	1 33%	1 25%	1 25%	2 40%	1 25%	1 25%	1 50%	2 50%	- -	- -	1 33%	- -	1 25%
State Regulatory Agency	7 41%	2 67%	2 33%	1 33%	2 50%	1 25%	2 40%	2 50%	2 50%	1 50%	1 25%	- -	- -	2 67%	1 100%	2 50%
Other	2 12%	- -	1 17%	- -	1 25%	1 25%	1 20%	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 50%	1 100%	- -	- -	- -
Not reported	3 18%	- -	2 33%	1 33%	- -	1 25%	- -	1 25%	1 25%	- -	1 25%	1 50%	- -	- -	- -	1 25%

ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges: Tabulation of Responses by Number of Students and Employees Served, and by LEC-12

What was the outcome of the complaint?

(Complained formally to agency )

	Students Receiving Telecom Services					Fulltime Equivalent Faculty/Staff				Local Exchange Carrier						
	TOTAL	Less than 900	900-1,599	1,600-3,199	3,200 or More	Less than 400	400-699	700-1,999	2,000 or More	Ameri-Tech	Bell Atlantic	Bell South	GTE	SW Bell	USWest	All Others
Number Reporting	17	3	6	3	4	4	5	4	4	2	4	2	1	3	1	4
Agency resolved complaint	3 18%	- -	2 33%	- -	1 25%	2 50%	- -	1 25%	1 50%	1 50%	1 25%	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 25%
Agency acted, but not resolved	3 18%	1 33%	2 33%	- -	1 25%	1 20%	- -	1 25%	- -	1 50%	1 25%	1 50%	1 100%	- -	- -	- -
To my knowledge, no action taken	6 35%	1 33%	1 17%	1 33%	2 50%	1 25%	2 40%	1 25%	2 50%	1 50%	1 25%	- -	- -	1 33%	1 100%	2 50%
Complaint is still pending	3 18%	1 33%	- -	1 33%	1 25%	- -	1 20%	2 50%	- -	- -	1 25%	1 50%	- -	1 33%	- -	- -
Outcome unknown	2 12%	- -	1 17%	1 33%	- -	- -	1 20%	1 25%	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 33%	- -	1 25%

***How does your local exchange carrier (LEC) typically handle unauthorized charges you bring to their attention? Description of "other" outcomes...***

- 0008 They inform me there is nothing they can do to stop it or to get the credit. I have tried repeatedly to work with Bell South for some type relief from the charges. They say they can't do anything.
- 0010 Removes charges after looking into them on future bill, could go 2-3 months.
- 0012 Generally very reactive to our concerns in this area.
- 0014 Unable to remove some charges.
- 0017 I submit invoices in question, LEC contacts service sending invoice and within 30 days we receive credit. Please note, this has just happened for the last 3 months, prior to that I had to contact billing service directly.
- 0022 [LEC removes charges from our account without question] Bell Atlantic prepays long distance and other charges. We refuse to pay unauthorized charges. Those charges not credited appear on the Bell Atlantic telephone bill as back charges. We call the responsible vendor also.
- 0024 SOP has evolved over time. Confusing and cumbersome at first. Now we do a spreadsheet of challenged calls, fax it to contact, who credits our account and reverses charges immediately to lesser operators; but gives the 4 big guys (AT&T, MCI, Sprint, and LCI) 30 days to reply before crediting our account. In either case, we are asked by Bell to contact the carrier to cancel the account.
- 0032 Advises us to contact the responsible vendor or billing clearinghouse for credit.
- 0041 Bills are direct from carriers, rarely through LEC. ANI shows main BTN which is how IXC obtains billing address and mails directly to college.
- 0051 Frontier has been stripping all unauthorized charges from our bill, however, this will soon change because the amounts have gotten large and Frontier cannot continue covering these charges for us.
- 0054 A combination of [answers] A and C and sometimes B.
- 0056 [LEC advises us to directly contact responsible vendor and suggests no other alternative] If we do not pay the unauthorized charges Southwestern Bell assesses a 10 percent late payment charge for the first \$30 and then a 2 percent charge on the remaining unpaid balance.
- 0059 [LEC] Partners with us in addressing the problem. Most charges are removed. Some require more effort.
- 0063 Southwestern Bell will credit if they can; most times I have to call the billing company.
- 0072 Will credit some carrier charges—not others. Waives charges for returning PIC to appropriate vendor, but reluctant or tardy in removing initial charge to change.
- 0075 Eventually removes some, but not all, of those charges. We also contact responsible vendor in an attempt to stop the future charges.
- 0079 Advise us to contact responsible vendor to get the charges blocked. This is where the problems come.
- 0080 We only pay Bell South charges. They issue credit for unauthorized charges, but the credits can take several billing cycles to appear. This leaves us with a large unreconciled balance each month.
- 0082 Handled by staff at the main state agency before we get the charges.
- 0090 Contact persons making unauthorized calls to collect and removes charges that cannot be traced to the college faculty/staff/students.
- 0105 And is helpful in contacting vendors.
- 0109 I include a standard form letter including charges with the statement we the University refute the charges as erroneous and fraudulent, and refuse payment. After about 3-4 months a credit appears.
- 0116 We also have to contact the responsible vendor.
- 0119 Both [answers] B and C, depends on the vendor.

- 0120 We send them the unauthorized charges and they contact billing company and in most cases we receive credit.
- 0121 We have 13 offsite telephone numbers those carriers, AT&T, GTE, Southwestern Bell refuse.
- 0127 Advises us to call responsible party (originating carrier), if this does not work to send charges back to LEC for credit. We may or may not receive credit. Sometimes we get credit then get rebilled months later.
- 0134 We deduct invalid charges from the bill.
- 0138 [Reversing these charges] is a recent change. Prior to 1/1/99, USWest's response was resolve it with the vendor.
- 0142 Due to change of USWest staffing (3 times), we have 8 months or more of disputed charges to submit to them, as the new USWest reps [not legible].
- 0148 Depending on vendor and type of charge, could be [answer] A, B, or C. May also want to consider the following: non-inquiry carriers (everyone except AT&T, MCI, LCI, and Sprint) disputes are handled by Bell Atlantic regardless of the dollar amount. Adjustments requested from AT&T, LCI, MCI, and Sprint require inquiry before being recoured to Bell Atlantic. If a response is not received from these carriers within 30-33 days, then we recourse the charges to Bell Atlantic who issues the adjustment. If the claim is under \$10, Bell Atlantic will issue the adjustment and no dispute notification is necessary. If the claim is equal to or greater than \$10, Bell Atlantic must send a dispute notification to the carrier and allow 33 days for the carrier to respond by mail. If no response from the carrier after 33 days, then Bell Atlantic will make the recourse adjustment.
- 0149 We short pay all disputed charges, we contact and try to receive credit and block further, unsuccessful attempts, we turn to SBC and they go after credit and blocking, we never pay disputed and SBC keeps a running tab but never forces payment.
- 0151 Usually speak to the individual company that was responsible for the charges.
- 0158 LEC reviews each request, contacts vendor, and give credit when it is received from vendor.
- 0159 [LEC credits the institution] ...knowing that I contact the vendor/clearinghouse for credit.
- 0165 Depends on type of charge. Most unauthorized charges from Sprint (such as for value plans or psychic hotlines) are removed upon our request without question. Student (individual) calling card charges show up on our AT&T bill, and we are told to call the vendor or clearinghouse (which is usually a dead end—we have a form letter that we send to them).
- 0171 Removed charges with letter to carrier from Ameritech explaining unauthorized [not legible].
- 0172 Previously, we contacted vendor, to no avail. We were finally able to meet with LEC and negotiate action. Now, we deduct unauthorized charges before check is written by Bursor's office and wait for charges on bill to be removed.
- 0172 After months of remaining on bill credit is applied [by the LEC].
- 0176 Presently we are compiling a total listing of all unauthorized billings by dates, bill pages, telephone companies, and totals to submit to Bell Atlantic. Bell Atlantic has indicated credit will be issued.
- 0177 In the past they have said we would get credit but the only credit we saw was directly from the company. We have a new [LEC] rep who said they could send back the charge to the billing company.
- 0179 For those vendors that Southwestern Bell has a billing agreement in place, they remove charges. For all others, they refer us to the vendor with no help.
- 0180 Poorly, vaguely. Credit next bill, but no specificity on what is agreed to as an unauthorized charge.
- 0181 I directly contact the responsible vendors to request cancellation of service and credits.
- 0182 Send a list of charges, along with page numbers, of charge s that we aren't paying. Bell Atlantic credits these charges with no questions.

***If your LEC "Advises us to contact the responsible vendor or billing clearinghouse for credit, without any other suggested alternative"  
...Can you usually reach the clearinghouse?***

---

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 0017  | Prior to 3 months ago this was what we had to do.  |
| 0022  | With long delays.  |
| 0026  | Yes, but not easily.   |
| 0048  | Usually cannot reach by phone, so we send a form letter and a copy of the bills refusing to pay and asking for credit. |
| 0056  | Yes, eventually after being on hold for long periods of time.  |
| 0077. | Yes, after a big hassle trying to get telephone number.  |
| 0093  | Yes, but not easily, busy signals, wrong departments, etc.   |
| 0136  | Yes, but depends on which company.   |
| 0139  | 70 percent of the time.  |
| 0160  | 20 percent of the time cannot reach vendor.  |

***...Does the clearinghouse generally give you a satisfactory explanation of the charges?***

---

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 0007 | Very hard to reach.   |
| 0022 | I don't look for explanations. I look for credits.                              |
| 0024 | Some polite and professional. Some rude and curt.                               |
| 0056 | Yes, most of the time, after lots of explanation and talking to several people. |

***...Does the clearinghouse generally resolve the problem to your satisfaction?***

---

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 0022 | Credit is applied, but new charges keep reappearing.    |
| 0093 | Yes, most of the time, but doesn't stop the recurrence. |

***Other Volunteered Comments and Suggestions***

- 0002 Sometimes clearinghouse says they can't give information because they are only a billing company, they didn't place call.
- 0005 My experience with this is very limited and is based on 6 months of responsibility for phone system.
- 0008 I am encouraged to see some actions taking place. If I can supply additional information, please let me know.
- 0008 The clearinghouse will sometimes refuse to issue the credit saying we are like the local exchange. I have written request for the companies to place flags or blocks on our 10,000 extensions. This has helped some. Also, the companies that will issue a credit, the following month will still reflect new charges for the same service, sometimes along with the credit from the previous bill. The charges never seem to stop. The companies [not legible].
- 0012 Since we switched to ATX those charges have diminished, they were instrumental in helping us retrieve over-payments and get other charges credited.
- 0015 I just wanted to stress the incidence [of charges], they are getting much worse and something needs done.
- 0016 Long distance vendor should not [not legible].
- 0017 This of course is too simple, however it is too bad the LEC when requested couldn't deny invoicing for these service providers.
- 0019 We've had extensive [not legible].
- 0020 It is difficult to find someone to speak to at the carrier end who would be willing to block their lines rather than rely on the Bell Atlantic block. We have no protection. Once credited from the LEC bill the carriers try to bill us directly.
- 0021 Sprint continues to send bills for numbers that do not exist. They attempt to charge minimum monthly service charges for non-existent numbers. We use MCI as our long distance carrier.
- 0024 Seems like as fast as we can shut some down, others appear. We have given our bank of numbers to two telemarketers and directed them to cease calling. They are very hard to track down and others take up where they left off.
- 0025 I still want to make it known that reaching a clearinghouse is very time consuming, the amount of time on hold averages 20 minutes, most of the employees are very rude and will try hard to tell me, each month, that they should not have to give us credit for the charges. When I go back to my LEC, they try to force me back to the clearinghouse before they will do anything.
- 0028 I find fewer unauthorized charges now. Previously we had several stolen and fraudulently used corporate credit cards. Employees are more aware of this scam now and our telephone provider will police the cards and will call us immediately if they see suspicious activity. We have had a horrible experience with the informational operator giving out department numbers instead of the main switchboard number at the college. It has been very difficult to correct the information in the computer to show Colgate's main number. There is no control organization—dozens of long distance carriers so it is hopeless. The callers are very frustrated, along with our department secretaries who receive these calls.
- 0029 My name is Sharon Hebert. I am the secretary of the Telecommunications Department and it is my responsibility to contact the vendor, cancel the services, and request a refund. It is a monthly problem and can be very frustrating.
- First of all I want to state that we currently have a block on all of our lines with Bell Atlantic and AT&T, however this only covers their services. In the beginning, I asked a representative from Bell Atlantic about these charges and obtaining a credit. They informed me that I would have to contact each vendor. I asked the representative from Bell Atlantic, since the charges were not authorized and were pending a refund, if we could just deduct that amount from our monthly payment. I was told that this would create a problem and we should just pay the charges and wait for the refund from the vendor.
- I proceeded to call each vendor canceling the services and requesting a refund and continued this procedure monthly. Later, as the list grew longer, I would fax the accounts to be cancelled

with a written request for credit. Each time I called a new vendor, I would ask them for the phone numbers dialed to activate these services so I could block them in our PBX and thus prevent anyone on campus from calling them again. I was repeatedly told that they could not give me that number. I would then ask if I could send them a list of our lines and trunks so they could block them on their end. Sometimes it was simply faxing them a list. Other vendors wanted it typed in a certain type of software that we did not have access to. One vendor wanted it typed in an ASCII file and the diskette mailed to them. I complied when I could, even to the mailed diskette. However, the blocks only worked for awhile and then the charges would start up again. When I asked for the reason we were billed when we have already had the blocking done, I was told that the block only works for so long and then has to be initiated again by us.

In regards to the refund, each time I call a vendor they of course tell me that a credit will take two to three billing periods. I inform them to issue the credit to our main billing account number. After waiting several months with no credit appearing, I call them again and I am told that the credit was issued or that it was refused by our local phone company. I then call the phone company to find out why the credit is not on our bill. Now here is where I get very frustrated. The vendor does not always issue the credit to our mail billing account. They usually issue the credit to the number billed originally. This number is either one of our trunk numbers or actual telephone extensions. When they bill us the phone company has no trouble at all in adding the charges to our main billing account number. Even though the vendor is billing this other number that falls under our main account. But when a refund is issued to that same number, the phone company cannot locate the correct account to apply it to. This completely baffles me. So I have gone round and round with the phone company about this problem and finally spoke with a representative from the Collections Department. She informed me that our main billing account is a summary account. This meant that instead of the ten digit account number I was giving the vendors, I should have been giving them a sixteen digit account number. So when we now request a credit have the vendor apply it to our summary billing account number. This should help us to get our expected credits.

Last week when I was on the line with one of the vendors and again asked for the phone number dialed to activate the account, the representative informed me that I would have to write directly to the company they are billing us for. This is the first time any representative mentioned this possibility. I immediately asked for and received the mailing address of the listed company. I then went through my current bill and called other vendors and received five more addresses. Then I typed up a form letter requesting all the numbers anyone would dial to access their services and addressed one to each of the six companies.

At this point, I was thinking about sending a copy of the letters to the FCC. However, I decided instead to allow each company a chance to respond to my request, since this is the first contact with these six companies I have had. I will wait a reasonable length of time for a response. If I do not receive my list of phone numbers, then I will send another letter to the same company informing them that I will be taking my complaint to the FCC. I will then send a cover letter explaining my dilemma to the FCC along with a copy of the letter sent to each company.

My question is how this continues to happen. The vendors billing us never have accurate information on the person who allegedly opens up the account. The names and addresses are usually fictitious. They bill only by the phone numbers, which belong to the college not the person making the call. Why can't it be the responsibility of the company providing the service to check out if the person activating the account is indeed authorized to do so. Services should not become active or the account charged until this is determined. I have been told by some of the vendors that the account is activated if the calling party does not hang up within three seconds of the tone. The account is then considered an active account and charges are billed monthly. Why are the block put on a line not permanent?

Hopefully, the information I have provided will be helpful and something can be done about this soon. Please keep me informed and feel free to call me if you have any further questions.

0037

Authorized charges for local calls is outrageous—any recourse available?

0038

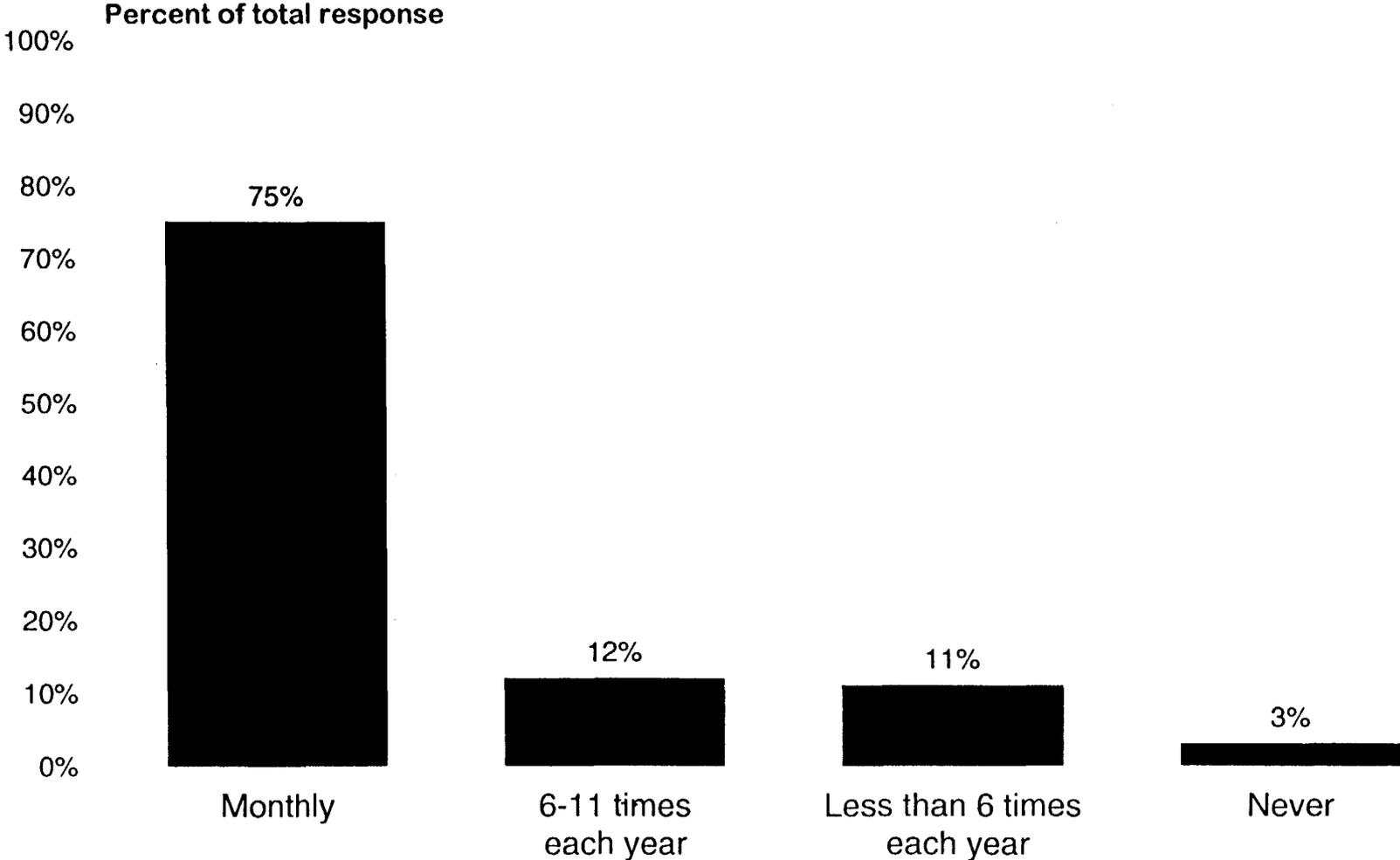
I did not know who else I could complain to.

- 0041 Carriers blame LEC for not blocking/code trunks. Carriers refer me back to LEC to prevent further billings. Some carriers use national/other carriers to back haul traffic. When a network failure occurred, the back haul carrier bills me for the usage (at 4 times the per minute rate).
- 0044 I have had very poor response from clearinghouse, [but] my carrier credits me if the offending charge isn't removed from my bill.
- 0047 I have signed an agreement with SWST for no changes to carrier without written consent from the university.
- 0048 This is a real problem for us; however, we have simply re fused to pay our LEC for the charges.
- 0050 Increasing due to the new services offered but not authorized by the university.
- 0053 On a monthly basis, the charges are hardly worth my time to chase them, but the principal of the matter of unauthorized charges makes me want to spend the time.
- 0054 Types of charges and their resolutions don't normally fall under a simply worded response option; they are more complicated and harder to track down to resolve.
- 0056 This has been one of those annoying problems for years. I just hate to get our bill from Southwestern Bell. It usually ruins my day. I would be forever grateful if something can be done about this.
- 0059 Have been following ACUTA's efforts on this matter. Feel the concerted group effort is better than anything an individual could/would be able to do.
- 0063 Most companies are very good about canceling charges and issuing credit. The two that I've had trouble with are AT&T and U.S. Billing. I'm very close to filing a complaint on U.S. Billing not only for the university bill but a personal bill as well.
- 0064 Since residence hall director will not pursue with residence students, students continue to get away with it and know they do not have to pay. Because our centrex lines are in the LIBD database and most rooms have two or more occupants so it can't be proven who made the call and the burden of verifying the block on the lines is strictly up to the billing IXC.
- 0065 We went to a reseller of Ameritech to resolve this problem. Reseller refuses to bill for any charges except line charges and authorized charges from Ameritech.
- 0066 We have given LEC and MCI, long distance carriers, our numbers to prevent unauthorized charges. Clearinghouse says they have provided LEC with billing numbers for unauthorized charges. LEC says doesn't get that information.
- 0072 ACUTA needs to unite with others to effect a policy change at the highest level of judicial authority.
- 0074 It is impossible at times to determine the owner of a particular telephone number.
- 0079 It is very inconvenient and makes the billing cycle difficult to assess.
- 0083 This is a particularly sore point for me. I have spent an ungodly amount of time calling and faxing and calling and faxing, most to no avail.
- 0084 We now have charges by AT&T on a card on which AT&T will not take responsibility for issuing the card.
- 0096 For the most part our USWest bill has been accurate.
- 0102 Credit process has improved but the unauthorized charges continue to appear on a regular basis.
- 0103 It never ceases to amaze me that anyone can pick up a phone and charge to a campus telephone number. And the LEC will bill it. The unidentified universal service charges which are billed to the main campus telephone bill from the LEC by AT&T are driving me insane. They (AT&T) won't/can't identify them or credit them. Nor will the LEC credit them. What a mess. Thank you for letting me vent.
- 0104 Our local provider has changed their bill format where they no longer provide the number in which the other companies bill on behalf of and this makes it impossible to receive credit from them.
- 0105 Have had major problems with the new MCI Worldcom student customer service.

- 0116 Vendors are becoming more adamant about not giving credits, we deduct all charges from our bills up front.
- 0118 Calls to cellular phones being billed to calling party would exponentially increase my problems.
- 0116 Though we were billed \$540, we also received an almost equal amount of credits, which Bell Atlantic applied.
- 0121 It takes a lot of time each month and some of the companies are rude.
- 0124 Most of the clearinghouses (USBI, ESBI, Integretel, etc.) issue credits readily based on a phone call or fax. MCI is the most difficult provider from which to obtain credits.
- 0124 Attached is the completed "cramming" survey. I appreciate ACUTA's initiative in this matter; it is a serious problem with no obvious solution other than monthly vigilance and complaints. I am happy to participate, and am willing to help in any way I can. The pattern of abuse I have noticed is that most of our charges result from students being able to establish calling card accounts based on their campus extension, and the use of ANI to determine the billing number, which results in identification of our campus trunks. This even after reporting the prohibited number range to many carriers. I have attempted to get Bellsouth to reject bills from the major offenders, but they say they can't do that.
- 0125 Sometimes the charges are small but the cost to remove so large (time wise) that we just let it go.
- 0127 Sometimes we cannot reach answering party and no one returns voice mail messages. Almost never get satisfactory explanation of charge from vendor. [Charge or problem resolution] Not usually as in some almost never.
- 0128 The end-user, the customer, is being abused and complaints are ignored by most long distance carriers and local exchange carriers.
- 0132 They stink.
- 0133 Have not had a problem yet.
- 0137 They are increasing.
- 0141 The LECs need to get out of billing third party services.
- 0142 The actions of both notifying the LEC and the offending clearinghouse/provider yield only partial success.
- 0144 The letters to PUC were copied to the offending company which helped resolve issues. This must be done on a regular basis. Our problem is not of slamming and cramming, but illegal charges made by students.
- 0145 Slamming and cramming are being controlled, the remaining are ongoing problems. Ways I have reduced these problems: block all outgoing caller IDs; remove all analog trunks yearly and then reinstall new trunks with new numbers.
- 0146 I appreciate ACUTA looking into this.
- 0147 I feel that if the LEC is going to bill for all the vendors that we should be able to go to the LEC for a resolution to our billing issues.
- 0148 Beginning fall 1997, numerous cramming and slamming charges began appearing on our bills. A form letter with an attached list of numbers to be blocked for collect, calling card, and third party billing was sent to each carrier as charges were received. Phone calls were also made to these vendors to cancel service and request credit. We tracked the requests for adjustments and credits received through a database set up for this purpose. We also complained loudly to our LEC who in turn provided us with the recourse procedure mentioned above. As a result, we have had very little problem with these charges since July 1998.
- 0155 We have had major difficulty in years past in receiving credits but as of the last year it has improved.
- 0157 Can usually reach responsible vendor but after being on hold for long amounts of time.
- 0160 Block on collect calls and third party calling does not always work.
- 0169 The only long distance vendor we have problems with not reaching by phone and they have a ridiculous message about calling before 10a.m. or after 7p.m.—their busy time. I was never

- able to get through to them. The vendor is North American under OAN Plus 1-800-539-2612. There is not direct number listed for North American Telephone. OAN Plus will connect you.
- 0175 Thanks so much for addressing this growing and annoying and costly issue.
- 0177 We have a particular problem with OAN and RSL. Credit was supposed to be issued a year ago.
- 0179 When we handle complaints from parents and students, they invariably tell us that they were given information by the vendor that billing to a university owned, PBX supported line, was acceptable. I and my staff have spent many hours on conference calls with students and with parents as they try to resolve these issues with vendors. Generally the vendors are less than helpful. We are very concerned about the position in which this ongoing problem places our students. Our students open an account with a vendor. The vendor charges TCU. TCU denies the charge and demands the account record be reflected to correct the charges. This process usually takes six months. In the meantime, the student has not received a bill and continues to make calls until their account is deactivated by the vendor. The student then contacts the vendor and finds that the student has been turned over to a collection agency for non-payment! The university is sometimes turned over to a collection agency for non-payment and the process begins again!
- 0180 AT&T bills us erroneously for PICC charges in Centrex. They also often bill us switched access rates for calls made over direct T-1. Never a clear explanation.
- 0181 The types of unauthorized charges are voicemail services, collect calls, calling card calls, and 800 service plans from small carriers such as Excel Telecommunications, Zero Plus Dialing, USBI, USP&C, Federal TranTel, Inc., Olympic Telecommunications, HOLD Billing Services, OAN Services, ILD Teleservices, Long Distance Billing Co., National Billing Exchange, Inc., and LCI International.
- 0182 We have what we believe to be fraudulent charges in dispute with AT&T. Credit has been pending 5+ months.
- 0186 We have discussed many of these issues informally with the State Attorney General's Office.

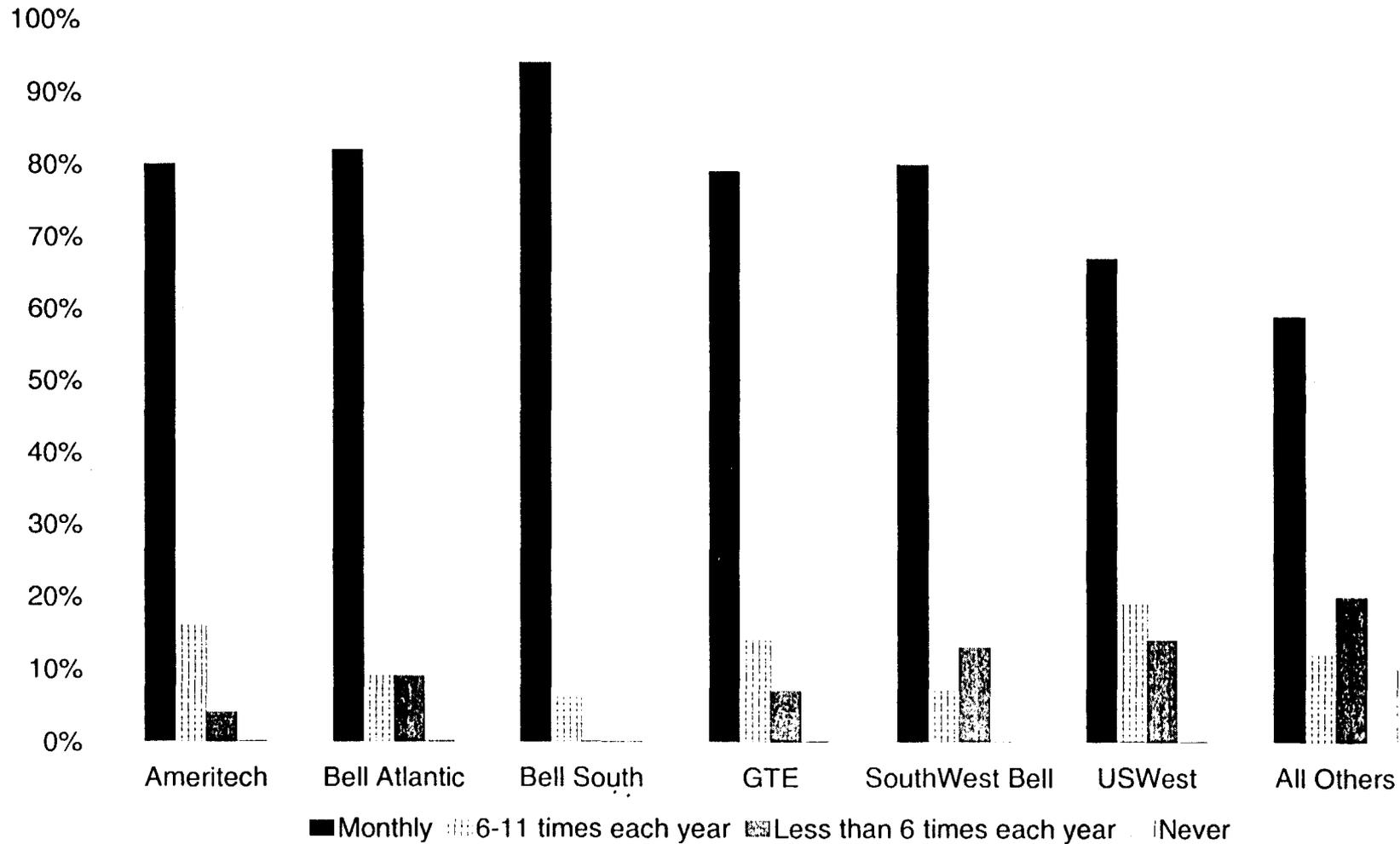
# Frequency of Unauthorized Charges on Monthly Bill



ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges

# Frequency of Unauthorized Charges on Monthly Bill

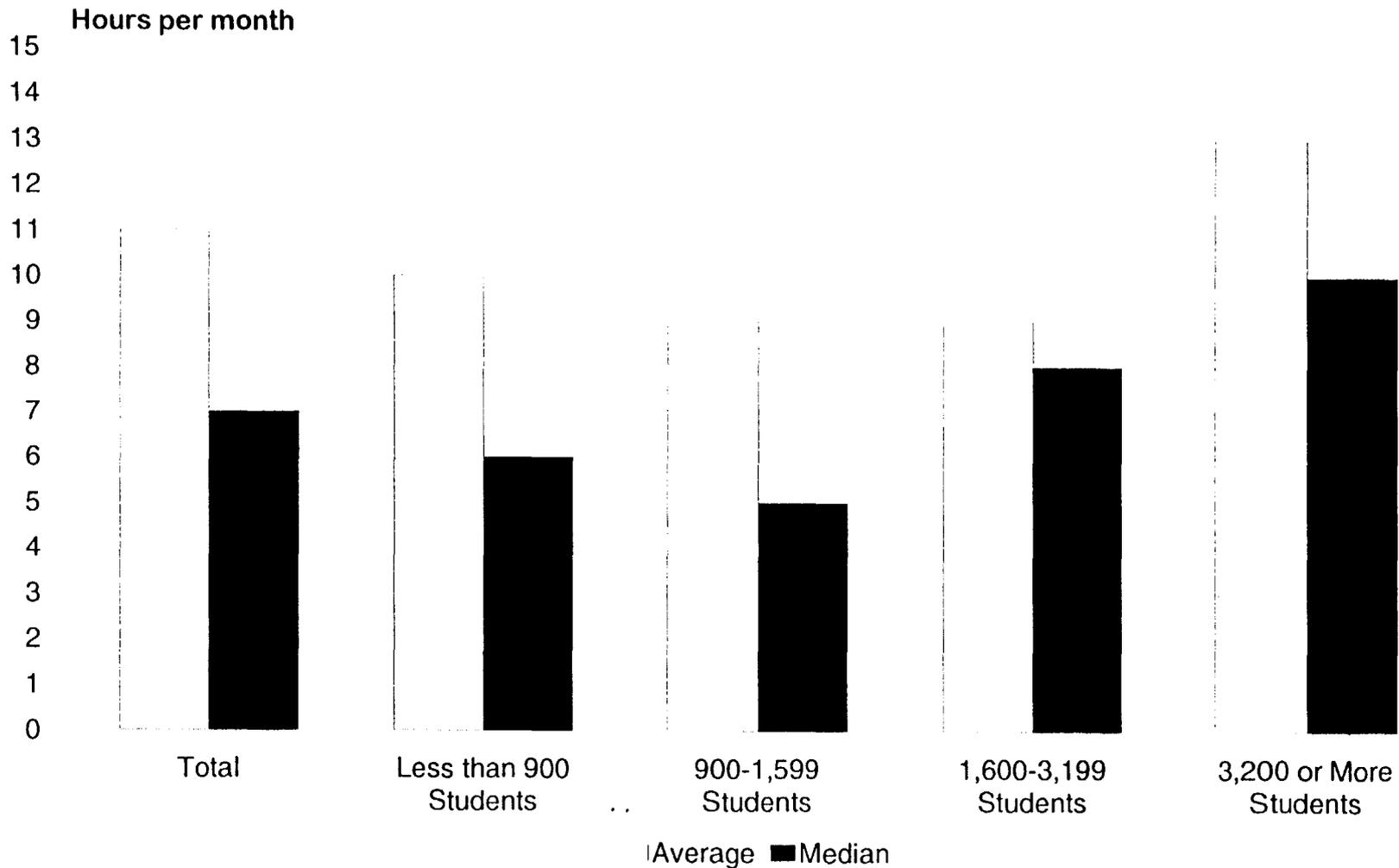
## By Local Exchange Carrier



ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges

# Staff Hours Per Month Spent Dealing With Unauthorized Charges

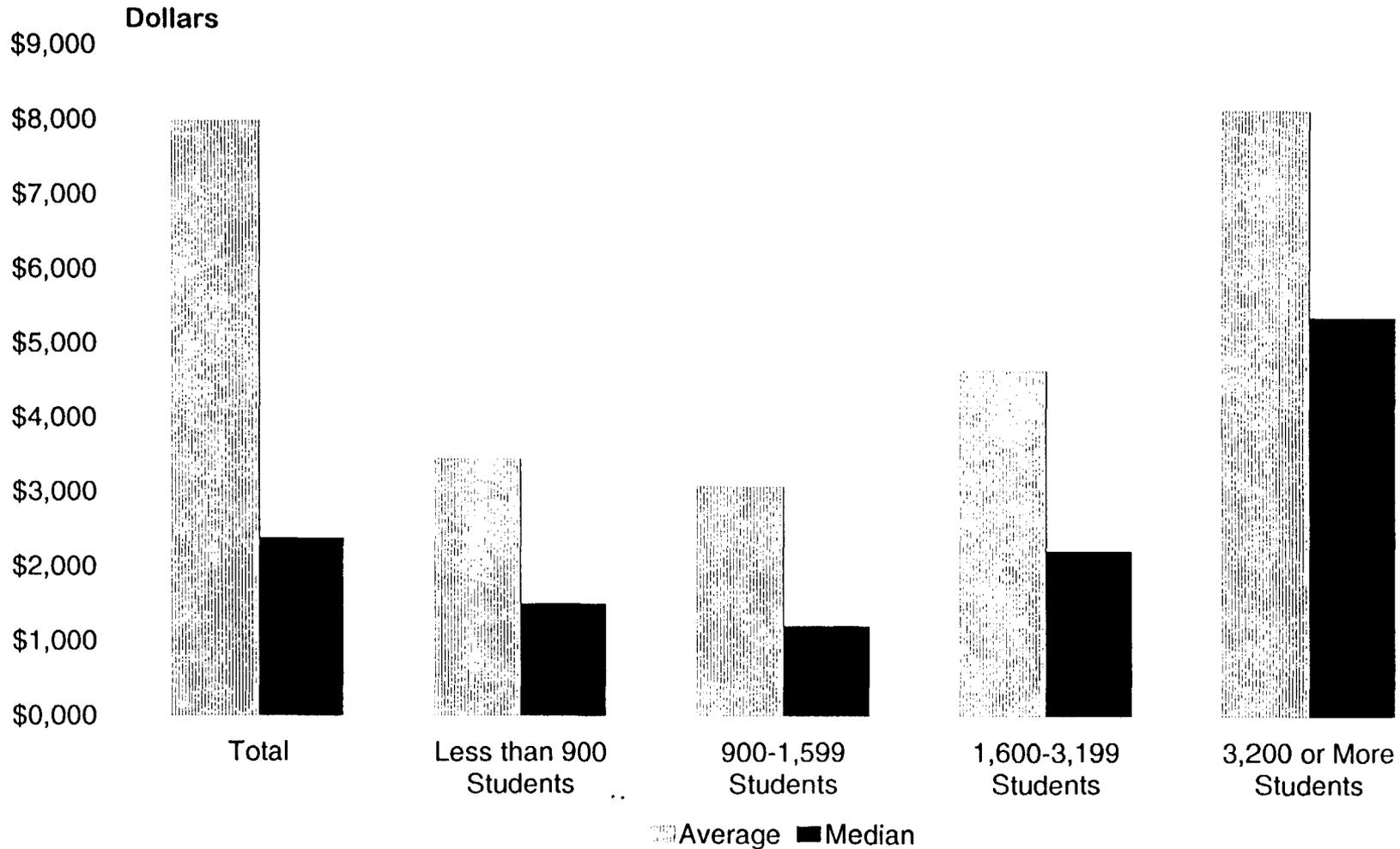
By Number of Students Receiving Telecom Services



ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges

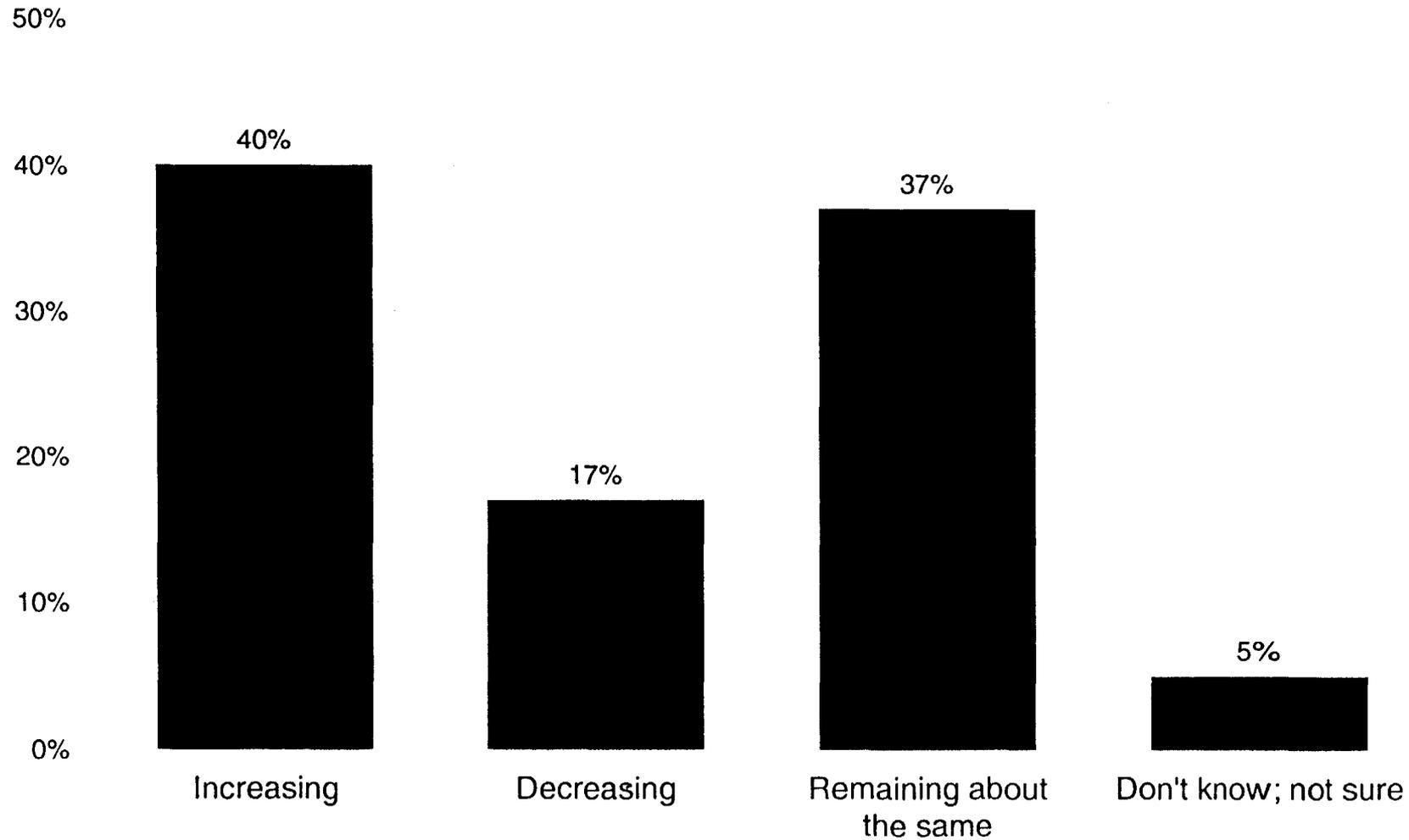
# Total Amount Billed for Unauthorized Charges Between 7/1/98-12/31/98

## By Number of Students Receiving Telecom Services



ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges

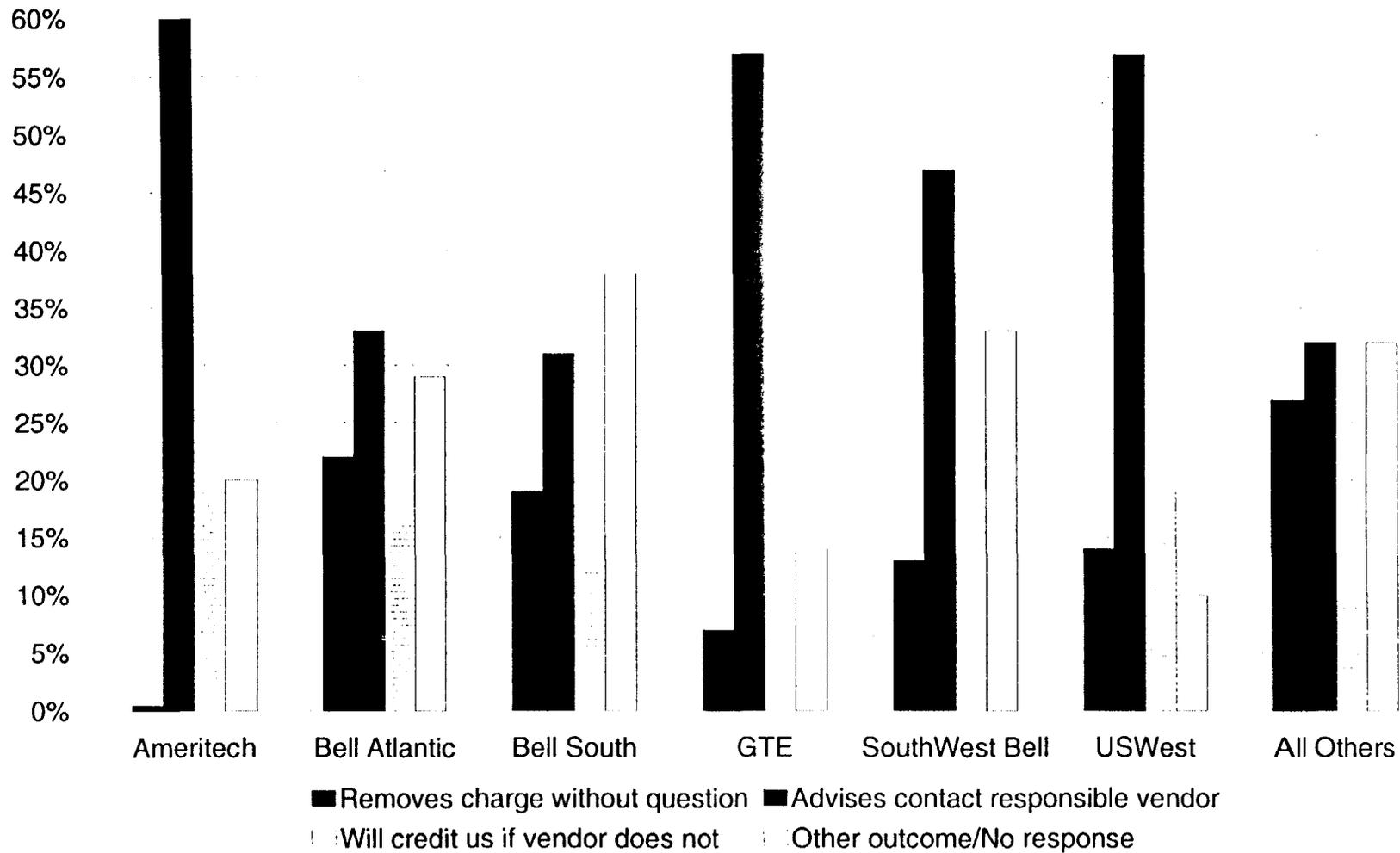
# Incidence of Unauthorized Charges Increasing or Decreasing?



ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges

# Handling of Unauthorized Charges

## By Local Exchange Carrier



ACUTA 1999 Survey of Unauthorized Telecommunications Charges

## Certificate of Service

I, Betsy M. Eisen, hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the preceding Erratum to Joint Comments of the Ad Hoc Telecommunication Users Committee and ACUTA: The Association of Telecommunications Professionals in Higher Education was served this October 5, 1999, via hand delivery upon the following:

David Siehl  
Federal Communications Commission  
Policy Division  
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

International Transcription Services, Inc.  
1231 20<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037



---

Betsy M. Eisen  
Legal Assistant

October 5, 1999