

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ruth Trometer

As I write this, my term as IALL president is fast drawing to a close. Our editor suggested I share my vision of IALL with you. To be honest, this took some thinking. My mind runs more toward getting things done rather than visions. If it is a good idea, why not do it? But of course, vision is what takes us from the realities of today to the possibilities of tomorrow. Projects evolve and goals are accomplished by building upon what we have accomplished so far.

Having IALL's purpose clearly in mind is essential to any vision of the future. For me, IALL exists to provide what is useful, necessary, and even enjoyable to its members. The Board and Council strive to achieve these goals by establishing forums to allow members to share their knowledge and experiences with each other. Our biennial conference, the News Review, the Journal, regional groups, the Member Services Committee, Dartmouth's electronic bulletin board, and IALL-sponsored sessions at other conferences are some of the ways in which we support this exchange. Some of these activities reach out to lab directors at their schools while others bring lab directors together. I think both are very important. So how do we evolve from these beginnings? Where do we go from here?

International Exchanges

I think the new links to our corresponding societies are one of the more exciting avenues we can explore. Sharing methods and materials internationally can be very useful, providing new perspectives and forms of exchange. Our second FLEAT conference is a great step in this direction as

is Otmar Foelsche's electronic bulletin board which has several foreign participants. IALL needs to explore further contacts with individuals and groups overseas, perhaps setting up "foreign correspondents" for the journal or bulletin board. We also started an IALL team that has traveled overseas to help establish such contacts. These beginnings need to be continued and expanded.

Research

Last summer the Board made a tentative plan to seek special funding for projects we felt were important to our organization. Many such projects never get done because of the time and cost involved, and because our organization typically operates on a volunteer basis. In addition to projects the Board identified, we agreed that IALL should seek support for research proposals from our members that could benefit our profession by providing vital information about some aspect of our field. These research projects could potentially supply lab directors with information necessary in their work, to obtain support from their administration, or to add to the credibility of our profession. This venture may take some time to develop, but would certainly be worth the effort.

New Topics / New Sources

Our traditional language labs are changing, as are our offices and the people with whom we must interact. IALL's exchange forums must encourage and in fact seek out those knowledgeable in new areas such as video, computers, interactive media, and the like. Further, we need to know more

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about how technology promotes learning and what kinds of problems faculty face when integrating technology into their teaching. We also need to understand more about conducting research with on-line databases, establishing electronic mail connections overseas, and many applications of technology to language instruction and research. Lab directors should not have to "reinvent the wheel" as they face these questions. We must seek out other professional associations and individuals with expertise in these areas. Appointing conference coordinators for ACTFL, TESOL, and AECT is one step in this direction. Inviting non-language lab professionals to address us (such as the architect and lawyers who spoke at IALL '89) is another step. Attending such meetings or having access to reviews of these professional conferences are both useful ways for us to gather relevant information from these diverse fields. These beginnings should be encouraged and expanded in our regional groups and within IALL. Such information certainly could be recorded and distributed through our Member Services Committee, so members could access this information as needed.

Special Interest Groups

Along with Regional Groups we could form Special Interest Groups to address the needs of specific populations: high schools, state universities, labs with no director, and even directors with no labs! Certain groups do have unique problems. Providing an

exchange format (newsletter, a section in the journal, SIG meetings at our conference) for these lab directors would not be difficult, and would certainly be helpful to the schools involved.

IALL Participation

I really cannot close without mentioning that your participation is perhaps the most essential part of my vision of IALL's future. It is an exciting time in our profession with many avenues to explore. Since IALL's goal is to simply provide lab directors with necessary and useful information, and since IALL *is you*, we need for you to participate and to share your knowledge and experience with your colleagues. Don't assume that everyone already knows what you know. Become involved and explore what you can do for the organization. There are always plenty of ways to participate, and we are always willing to consider others.

I hope to see all of you at UCLA in June for IALL '91. The meetings will be informative, provocative, exciting, and fun! We expect to have several colleagues from Japan participating along with us, and more details about the 2nd FLEAT Conference in Japan (1992) will be available. LeeAnn Stone will be taking over as President, newly elected officers will be installed, and I will retire into the relative calm of the Past-Presidency. So quick, before I fade away, think about which of my visions you might like to work on and give me a call!