

COOPERATION AMONG LANGUAGE LEARNING CENTERS AND CAMPUS MEDIA SERVICES

Robin Lawrason
Temple University

Susan Clabaugh
University of Maryland, College Park

Trisha Dvorak
University of Michigan

Carmen Greenlee
Bowdoin College

Jackie Tanner
Georgetown University

In difficult fiscal times, most institutions look for ways to operate more efficiently and eliminate unnecessary duplication of expensive services and facilities. From a campus perspective, cooperation and integration among service units can be valuable strategies in these efforts.

Many institutions have different levels of media support service units. Some are centrally administered while other units are housed within colleges or academic departments. The language lab, for example, is often seen as having different needs than other media facilities with its unique lab environment tied into the academic program for teaching foreign languages and frequently, ESL. Thus, such labs are often

operated independently of other media support services by language faculty and specialized staff. Campus politics, competition or differences in service philosophies can impede communication among different media units, or even bring them into direct conflict.

All media units today are faced with escalating budget costs for increasingly complex new learning technologies, service space, supplies, software and support staff needs. Thus, many media support staff on both campus and academic levels have developed alternatives for providing more effective service for their faculty and student clients.

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Language lab directors have always had to be resourceful people. They are asked to provide a wide range of services for language faculty, yet often are provided with less than a full range of resources within their own labs. Faced with an ever increasing range of technology useful in language learning, the director must be able to secure video, satellite, computer and interactive multimedia resources.

Just how do labs secure support for their students and faculty on a campus where resources tend to be housed in various locations and service units? While many labs have grown into integrated media and computer centers, few are fully self-sufficient. Many must rely on services they borrow, rent, or con from others.

Sharing resources is nothing new. Lab directors have often used central AV technicians to repair audio and other equipment if the lab could not afford its own technician. Today's lab director must now also barter with computer centers, libraries, television services and other campus academic and service units to secure access to resources useful for teaching language.

In today's world, however, there's also a perspective that is perhaps a bit less altruistic, but just as real, and that is self-preservation. In times of drastic cutbacks the more people who depend on your unit, the less likely you are to be cut. It's easy to eliminate a unit that is very self-contained and serves a small clientele. In today's cost-cutting environment, it's only through cooperation and integration that faculty and student services can be maintained.

College campuses are as varied as individuals and no single cooperative strategy will work for all. The following results of a 1991 survey of language learning lab directors and four case studies outline a range of

strategies attempted at both large and small institutions across the country.

IALL MEMBERSHIP SURVEY ON CAMPUS MEDIA UNIT COOPERATION

Robin Lawrason, Temple University

To learn more about how language lab directors communicate and develop cooperative strategies with other media units, over 400 surveys were mailed to IALL (International Association for Learning Laboratories) members in North America; 106 responses were returned.

The results of the 1991 survey indicated a wide spectrum of communication and cooperation among campus media units. Most directors reported that they communicate regularly and profitably with other campus media units. With resources shrinking, many found such cooperation beneficial in providing services for their clients.

Institutional Placement of the Lab

Directors were first asked specific questions about the placement of their lab within the academic institution. Over 84% of the respondents reported they were housed within an academic department or service unit within a college. The majority (65%) reported they provided less than 40% of the total computer and media support for their clients. Only a few (11%) provided more than 80%. Thus, language learning labs are most often small academic units with many full media services provided by audiovisual, television, media, computer, library and research departments.

Media Services Provided by the Lab

When asked to list those media services they provided, all directors listed audio and video preview, with 86% listing audio consoles. Some labs had less access to other media formats and showed reliance on other centers for these services. For example, only 68% of the labs surveyed had computers, 56% had satellite television, and 53% had interactive video. While 80% of the respondents reported computers available elsewhere on campus, only 43% had satellite television and 35% had interactive video available elsewhere on campus. Comments from a number of directors, moreover, suggested that foreign language faculty on their campuses were among the first to incorporate these new technologies in their teaching.

Shared Production Services

Sharing of tasks was also seen in administrative or production areas. Whereas all labs duplicate audiotapes, many reported that most other services were available at other units. For example, only 30% reported equipment repair services, while 64% reported this available elsewhere on campus. Other services more often found at other campus units included remote and studio video recording, video duplication and editing, satellite services, photo and slide production, and computing services.

Cooperation and Communication Among Media Units

Directors were next asked to rank, on a scale of one (agree) to five (disagree), their reactions to twenty statements about relationships between their labs and other on campus media units. The responses indeed recognized a moderate to heavy level of cooperation. Less than 10% were the sole media support on campus, and over 50%

assisted faculty in obtaining support from other units.

Communication among campus units, however, tended to be primarily informal. Over 50% responded they had regular informal communication, whereas only about 16% indicated they attended regular meetings, and approximately 18% reported their campus has some formal structure for communicating. Over 25% reported work with other units on instructional projects, and 27% reported mutually beneficial work on administrative projects.

Most lab directors (74%) found communication with other units important, and even more (76%) actually enjoyed the communication. Despite this high level of support, 54% would like to see communications improved.

One area of potential fear and conflict on campus can be the suspicion that central units want to control academic units such as the lab. When asked directly, 56% percent indicated they did not believe the central units were out to control the lab. While only 8.5% indicated some agreement with this concept, a full 26% did not respond to the question at all. While most directors do not seem overly paranoid, there does appear to be some hesitation and possible suspicion of motives.

Joint Media Projects and Strategies

The bulk of the open-ended responses to a question on joint projects and strategies stressed informal strategies such as person-to-person contact by phone or email as situations arose. Some mentioned informal lunches or sharing a building where contact was close and natural.

Other strategies included using AV for repair services, a newsletter, and jointly funded projects. Some mentioned the need

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for more persuasion and "force" to save taxpayers' dollars and to ease the effects of budget cuts.

Joint Projects

When asked what administrative or instructional joint projects lab directors worked on with other campus units, open-ended responses were in four overall areas. First, directors indicated they worked with other units on special applications of technology. Generally, these were big-ticket items such as satellite systems, interactive video demonstrations and equipment, and fiber-optic computer and video campus networks.

A second area of cooperation was in software and computer lab development. A number of directors listed instructional interactive audio and video research and development projects between departments. Others highlighted development of computer labs for specific subject disciplines.

Cooperation was also noted in the sharing of administrative duties. Some faculty-level directors indicated they oversaw the academic aspects of the lab, while AV and TV centers gave technical support and the computer center provided additional advice and consultation. Other cooperation was noted in the areas of planning equipment and facilities needs, developing copyright policy, purchasing of supplies and equipment to reduce costs, setting uniform service costs, developing faculty orientation materials, surveying campus media needs and developing campus media policies.

Finally, directors indicated cooperation through the sharing of talents, space and facilities. Many small labs noted that they could not afford to develop their own support services. Thus, some indicated sharing of such technical facilities as audio or video

editing, computer labs, repair services, and even budgets through shared costs for new resources. More directors without their own interactive or computer facilities reported using central labs to obtain needed support. Directors also "borrowed" expertise for planning new lab facilities from other campus media and computer units.

Most language lab directors depend upon other campus media units for obtaining support for their language faculty. In days of decreasing budgets and resources, cooperation among units is almost obligatory. Many of the directors surveyed indicated creative and useful ideas for sharing of resources among units. If both academic and administrative based centers share the goal of providing the best available services for their faculty and students, then such cooperation is an essential element in achieving that goal.

CASE STUDIES

To highlight cooperative strategies used at various university and college campuses, the following case studies from four different media operations reflect many of the same interests in sharing and cooperation seen in the survey. The first case study, the University of Maryland, represents the point of view of a central technology administrator. The other case studies present three different viewpoints from language learning lab directors.

COOPERATIVE MEDIA EFFORTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

Susan Clabaugh

The University of Maryland at College Park has taken a very decentralized approach to media support. It was left up to each unit to develop whatever support services it wanted. In recent years we realized, however, that due to the size of our campus (35,000 students) and the increasing sophistication of media needs, we had to find ways to communicate more and coordinate our efforts.

We are just completing the installation of a campus-wide cable system that has involved every media support unit on campus in the planning or operation of the system. The language media center handles the programming of our international satellite dish. Journalism donated a domestic dish dedicated to providing the whole campus with CNN. The Cable Project uses the campus system for feeding live programming from all over campus and Nonprint Media Services operates the headend. Engineering Instructional Television can pick up programs from our campus cable and rebroadcast them via satellite or Instructional Television Fixed Service. The Department of Communication Services handles the installation and maintenance of new video outlets in buildings and the Computer Science Center's networking group provides engineering support for the cable.

In addition to a track record of cooperation, we had a mechanism in place to help us respond appropriately. We have several campus-wide committees dealing with media and technology which include representatives from all types of media support units, including the language media center. I chair one of those committees. One of the major items the Provost put on our

agenda for this year is to take a hard look at how campus support units are organized and develop some concrete strategies for operating more efficiently.

This issue has an urgency that was unimaginable just a year ago. The University of Maryland has undergone some severe budget cuts this past year and the prospects do not look much better for the coming year. The campus has just recommended closing one academic college and eliminating eight degree programs. When everything from maintenance workers to well-established academic programs are being axed, it's unrealistic to expect that media support units will be left untouched. We who provide support services are trying to take the initiative to find a more efficient way to operate so that critical services can be maintained. Fortunately, we already had a plan in the works. We had realized several years ago that we needed to coordinate our activities better and last year had developed a plan to do just that.

So when the crisis hit, we were ready. The approaches we're using are the ones listed in the title of this session—cooperation and integration. We're identifying specific areas where, by working together, we can be more efficient, such as bulk purchases of materials and supplies, and sharing of equipment.

We're also trying to integrate units where it makes sense. In 1992 the Provost approved merging three units. The alternative was to eliminate one because budget cuts left it without the resources necessary to continue operating separately. It is a valuable unit that needed to be preserved and by merging it with the other two units, both of which were also cut, there was a critical mass that made continuation possible. An additional benefit of the merger is that it will make the facility available to the entire campus community, something that's difficult

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to do when a unit is housed in a department which does not have a campus-wide mission. In a time of cutbacks, we're able to expand services. Preserving resource units would not have been possible if we had not had the cooperation of all those involved. Our established cooperation allowed us to move quickly to propose the merger.

"United we stand, divided we fall" is more than just an adage we memorized in childhood. Everyone benefits if we cooperate as much as we can and integrate whenever it preserves valuable resources and services. It may be threatening to some, but for one who's tried it, I have to say it works and it's worth the effort.

COOPERATIVE MEDIA EFFORTS AT BOWDOIN COLLEGE

Carmen Greenlee

Speaking about cooperative ventures between the Bowdoin College Language Media Center and Audio Visual Services has given me the opportunity to reflect a bit upon both our history and our relationships with other units. This comes at a time when organizational changes, driven primarily by fiscal concerns, are forcing us to seek innovative solutions—to forge new alliances on our campuses—in order to meet the demands of increasingly sophisticated users. Our Learning Media Center and Audio Visual Services have cooperated in three specific areas during the last few years (when we were still on the Gravy Train!).

The Language Media Center (LMC) of Bowdoin College was established in 1984 as a result of a generous gift from the Pew Memorial Trust. Formerly the Film, Video and Language Laboratories, the renovation was able to take advantage of new technologies to support language teaching and

replaced our "Pre-Columbian" laboratory, first established in the 1950s. As well, a generational change occurred in our language teaching faculty. Younger faculty accustomed to using audio/visual materials available at larger graduate schools assisted in the design of a resource center which provides a Tandberg audio-active laboratory, 18 video stations (all standards and types), a short-wave receiving station, and 4 satellite dishes receiving Russian, South American, European and domestic programming. Also provided is an array of support services such as audio and video duplication, standards transfer, off-air taping, and the like.

We are staffed by a director, 13 student assistants, and a full-time electronic technician (housed in our center) whom we share with an adjacent electronic film program. We are located in the basement (of course!) of a classroom building which also houses the majority of the modern language offices and the Classics Department.

Bowdoin College Audio Visual Services is housed at the opposite end of the campus (although it is a small campus of 1,400 students, during the spring mud season in Maine it can seem like a continent away). Now staffed by a director and his crew of students, our AV department provides nearly every service needed by faculty and staff. In fact, the Director of AV Services does (and can!) boast to incoming faculty at their orientation that AV will try to provide any service they ask for. From preparation of slide presentations to video editing to presentation graphics, AV can do it all. Little wonder that our AV Director wears out several pairs of shoes a year!

Cooperative Facilities Planning

There is no general Media Center for our campus. AV provides services to areas as different as lecture halls and hockey arenas, for events as varied as dance and chamber

music performances. The dedication of the Language Media Center coincided with the video and satellite explosion in academia. The single classroom that had been designed for media, coupled with a lobby area which showed live foreign broadcasts, were simply not enough to satisfy campus needs. Since, as I said earlier, we were still riding the Gravy Train, the former director of AV, our electronic technician and I were able to sit down and work out a plan to pool our resources to install video projection systems in larger lecture halls, auditoriums, and some classrooms; to purchase video systems for permanent installation in hard-to-get-to classrooms and common-room spaces (remember our winters!); and to put tri-standard video recording and playback systems in the offices of the modern language faculty. We think that these efforts have been successful. In the process, we have increased faculty independence, taught them some valuable skills and alleviated stress on the media classroom in the Language Media Center. The independence brought about by putting media directly into faculty hands has also provided the impetus for educating them on college copyright policy.

Cooperative Videotape Storage

Our second cooperative project has been a system we worked out to deliver the videotapes stored in the LMC to the appropriate class at the right time. Although AV Services operates almost 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, the LMC is open many fewer hours. Through an arrangement with the Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, videotapes are acquired and cataloged before being stored in our facility. Those wishing to show a videotape from our non-circulating collection in a class call the AV scheduler. One of the questions they are asked is whether or not the tape is a part of the LMC collection. On the appointed day our tape is taken to the AV box located at the main informa-

tion desk of the student union, which is central to campus and is open almost around the clock. Tapes are tagged with information about their origin, and place and time of showing. They are then returned to this same place after the showing by the student assistants from AV for pick-up by students from the Language Media Center. AV's students no longer worry about where the tape will be found, and the LMC staff no longer worries about having to be open in order to give out the tape.

Cooperative Slide Library

The third venture is the most recent. The Classics Department, which houses the majority of its vast slide collection in the slide library of our Visual Arts Center, is located in the same building as the Language Media Center. They have a full-time curator of slides, who oversees a staff of student assistants. The classical archaeologist was frustrated by the restrictions placed on him (number of slides which could be produced per month, etc.) by the high demand on the curator's time. He and a few language professors looked for a place to produce slides for their classes and for a place to store them. The Language Media Center seemed like the logical place in our building for such a facility. We met, and after speaking with the AV director, created a studio and slide library by combining equipment already used by AV with other equipment purchased by the Language Media Center, Classics, and Romance Languages. We have saved countless hours, dollars, and, especially, a good deal of space by this effort.

Future Cooperative Efforts

Needless to say, it is quite a bit easier to cooperate on such projects when getting together means calling a meeting of two or three people over a chocolate chip cookie and a glass of milk in the student union.

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Large or small, public or private, our mission in these days of shrinking resources is the same. I would not be surprised if radical change were to come to the structure of AV Services and the Language Media Center at Bowdoin College in the next few years. A new college librarian was to be appointed in 1992. I believe that one goal of the administration is to try to consolidate all media operations under this person, if for no other reason than that no one seems to know what to do with media. If so, great care will have to go into making sure that the respective charges of the Language Media Center and Audio Visual are not diluted. The job of any director of a language laboratory is to support language study with the technologies at hand. We are "super-specialists" in an already specialized field.

Cooperating with central media services not only aids in streamlining services, but the end results afford us the opportunity to point out tangible savings when the budget officer comes to visit.

OBSERVATIONS ON COOPERATIVE EFFORTS BASED ON EXPERIENCES AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Jackie Tanner

Let me play devil's advocate here and present an alternative view of the topic of cooperation between language learning centers and central media services. First, what are some of the reasons why a language lab may not find cooperation with a media center? Differences develop over funding allocations, service philosophies and policies.

Central media centers sometimes see the language lab as a small independent unit that gets money for specific purposes, a competitor for a limited amount of money and a favorite of administrators. On some campuses, language centers charge a lab fee to students in basic language courses, fees that provide the money for special equipment for language needs. On the other hand, central media centers generally receive their budget allocations from tuition percentages or as a part of a library's budget based on student enrollments.

Who fills the most requests? Whose budget gets funding for special projects at the end of the year? Who is the most visible? Media centers, like other service organizations, find that good service is expected and a mishap can easily become a crisis—regardless of how many times good service was provided. Criticism of one unit by another over a single mishap can not only be unfair but also unproductive in fostering cooperation.

The request for support of specific language learning needs has often led the way on campus for new media development and the use of emerging technologies. The language center may be allowed to expand into new technologies while the central media center continues with basic services.

Another source of conflict between media units relates to overall service policies. For example, central media centers are often required to charge for some services, not only materials costs but also labor. Language centers, however, may not have to charge faculty for the same work or may be able to charge only for the materials costs. This is an enormous benefit when a new civilization course needs 300 slides and the cost per slide can be kept to materials only. The lower price could determine for a department whether or not they can afford to offer a new course with adequate resources.

Language labs and media centers may also clash over equipment loan policies. For example, years ago a language center may have had the only PAL/SECAM or multi-standard player on campus. For a central media center its use was considered minimal or of limited value when compared to providing standard video players to a larger number of users. But as soon as Government, History or Arts learned that the unit was available, out came unused videos from Europe or Asia and these departmental users began requesting access. If the equipment is restricted to language lab areas and student language users pay a lab fee, how do non-language departments gain access?

Without careful planning competition for the same services can develop, and the distinctions between the two media facilities can fade. Moreover, faculty and students can become confused about where to go for various media services. Many potential users feel they are "getting the run-around" when told to go to another unit for service. Users do not really care about where the operating budget comes from; they only care about receiving services promptly when they need them.

Staffing assistance can also vary between the two levels of campus media units. Central media centers use more student staff to deliver equipment to classrooms all over campus. Language labs tend to have fewer staff members and serve smaller areas. Frequently, language teachers have classes in the same building as the lab so that the language lab can respond to media equipment needs. But if those same language teachers go across campus, then the central media center fills their requests. In good times co-operation levels are adequate, and trade-offs are easily managed. At other times the central unit may respond, "It's a language request—you fill it."

Are central units obliged to assist language lab units that are funded separately? In many cases the central media center's budget comes from all enrolled students. The language students are not subtracted from this figure, and indeed may pay an additional user fee for special needs. Under these circumstances language faculty have a legitimate request when requesting services from the central media center. On the other hand, not knowing how budgets are allocated, English and History faculty do not understand why their media requests cannot be filled by the language lab.

Another difference between the central and language media units is service philosophy. Because of its smaller size and fewer clients, the language center can handle requests on demand more easily. Language lab staffers tend to be "tinkerers." For example, a language teacher might come by and say, "I could use something like this, can you help me do it?" The lab technician will often find some way of fixing or modifying a program or piece of equipment to assist the teacher meet a specific need. Language lab staff are often famous for this "can-do" attitude.

Larger media centers may be more structured than the smaller language center. Teachers often hear, "You want that today? You're kidding—you're supposed to give us forty-eight hours notice." Language teachers may not be accustomed to adhering to a structured syllabus as are teachers who give lecture courses. Language students vary; if they do not understand a specific language point, the class cannot go on until that point is clarified and the class properly prepared for the planned media activity. If the equipment was scheduled for today, but cannot be used because the students are not ready for the planned agenda, then the activity has to be rescheduled and the equipment requested for the following day. However, if

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the equipment is not available then, the classroom activity is further delayed.

When staff deliver media equipment from central media centers, they may have the time to move it between classes to the next classroom, but not to stay and work with the teacher. Often there is not even time to plug equipment into the wall. This problem can also occur in language lab classrooms, but more often, there is staff available to help the teacher set up and use the equipment properly.

Language teachers report that they need fully equipped media classrooms so that activities can continue according to student readiness. When such media classrooms are available, language teachers have more time to practice with their program materials before class time. Many language centers have such media classrooms along with small preview rooms. Both facilities provide additional space for hands-on activities for faculty to try out materials before taking them into the classroom. With adequate staff and space media units can help teachers figure out how equipment and programs work, and how to use them more effectively. Because of differences in funding, service policies and service philosophies, language labs and campus media services do not always find cooperation easy. On many campuses there are not just two media centers, but several. Each one has developed to serve a small localized group with specialized needs in separate locations. For instance, the Law School, the Medical School, Engineering, Education and Business all see their roles differently.

Cooperative Trends Emerging

Currently, we are seeing the increased use of computers, and computing centers, as well as a wide variety of computer software, developing on all campuses. It was difficult enough before the advent of

computerized data to keep up with the storage of film titles in different locations, convincing faculty and staff to submit film titles to a central site like the library, and to allow others limited access. Now we learn of even more resources located in new areas with little in the way of organized or even disorganized lists. While some schools manage to cooperate, others find it more difficult to give up any autonomy. Sharing use of the same film may be difficult to arrange. Sharing catalogue titles, however, has become easier using new computerized systems.

Cooperative ventures can develop in administrative areas. Media units can work together on buying supplies like video or audiotape or computer discs in larger quantities to get a lower price. They may also consult with each other over writing specifications, or in agreeing to use a standard VHS machine to reduce the problem of acquiring parts or handling repairs. They may also share in use of specialized expensive repair tools or in providing staff training.

In South Carolina a state oversight committee was set up in the 1980s to evaluate new multimedia projects and purchase requisitions. This was both good and bad for media units at the University. The process was designed to encourage communication between campuses and to avoid duplication of some projects. However, it delayed the issue of purchase requisitions when readers attempted to evaluate projects as competitive or dissimilar.

Despite these negative comments about cooperation, some positive sharing is possible among media units. An engineer from one unit who has experience in satellite installation can help another group with its installation. A campus video network can add a channel from or for another group for wider distribution. PAL/SECAM

conversion to NTSC from one group's machine can serve all instructional activities. Installation and upgrades of computer software can be done campus-wide by a computer specialist from the computer center.

Multimedia work stations are increasing in numbers in all departments. The high cost of electronic classrooms is necessitating more sharing among campus media groups. Integration of some services, even while maintaining separate identities, will continue. Budget problems indicate that our survival depends upon it. The positive examples shared here acknowledge that we are indeed aware of the necessity and are working toward that goal.

COOPERATIVE MEDIA EFFORTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Trisha Dvorak

My experiences at the University of Michigan range from one extreme to the other. We have 36,000 students and 18 different schools. And instead of having two or three people to get together over a chocolate chip cookie, 8 of the 18 schools have their own—and sometimes more than one—media organizations. For example, the Language Resource Center is part of the largest college in the University: Literature, Science and the Arts. Faculty and students in our college can be served by two university-level media units (The Film/Video Library and a Self-Help Lab), two college media units (the LRC and a central media services unit) as well as by several departmental media units (e.g., video production and post-production studios in the Communications Department).

While political forces and de-centralized traditions have tended to encourage units to develop and maintain their own apparatus as independent entities, there is a growing recognition that perhaps sharing can also be a good idea. So far, I've experienced media cooperation and collaboration in two distinct ways: the first involves cooperation to achieve shared goals; the second involves cooperation that has enabled our unit to achieve some very specific goals.

Cross-Campus Media Unit Cooperation: Achieving shared goals

Collaboration among units has been achieved through the efforts of an informal organization that has been around for quite a long time at the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan Educational Communication and Technology Association (UMECTA) includes representatives from each of the various media organizations on the Ann Arbor, Flint and Dearborn campuses. Getting together regularly, we share information about what is new in instructional technology, what sort of projects people are working on, what their needs are, what problems they've encountered as well as the solutions they have developed. Often, this sort of informal sharing has been very helpful in getting people to recognize that we are indeed all in the same boat and that we all do in fact face a number of the same challenges. Recently, UMECTA decided that working together more formally could help us to achieve some larger goals. These resulted in three initiatives.

Media Resource Guide: The first of these involved the creation of a media resource guide for the whole university, including the branch campuses. The Guide provides information on the people and places on campus one can call for assistance with various media tasks. We found that both old and new faculty members often had no idea as

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to where to go or who to talk to for help. Actually, even those of us within media learned some useful details about who could do what! This little guide we published enables us to route faculty and other staff appropriately when they need a particular service.

Service Swaps: Second, we agreed to be flexible with unit-to-unit charge-backs for services provided. Most of our units have a charge-back system whereby services are provided for free to individuals within their own unit, and charged to people outside. Now, however, if one unit is the single service source and needs help from another, they have been willing to work out a "swap" to avoid charge-backs. For example, for quite some time the LRC was the sole source of satellite programs at Michigan. We often swapped access to this technology to the Engineering School; and in exchange, they helped us with some of our network needs.

Copyright Policy: And third, UMECTA has begun to pressure the University administration to come up with an official copyright policy. This issue is one that we all face, but in typical fashion each of us has its own policies. Within UMECTA we have worked together to make sure that were all applying the same standards in a manner that faculty could perceive as uniform. We are still trying to get the University to come up with an overall policy, but the fact that all of us have worked together has improved our chances of success.

LRC and other Media Units: Achieving Our Goals Through Inter-Unit Collaboration

The LRC does not have the space, the facilities, the staff or the resources to respond to all the needs of language faculty and students. Not only that, but in the current fiscal climate, we do not think we are

going to be able to get the dollars to expand our base anytime soon. The only way for us to provide for our clients is through creative collaboration with other media units. Let me briefly describe six specific examples where such collaboration has enabled us to achieve our own service goals.

Media Production: The Language Resource Center at Michigan is similar to Bowdoin in that from an initial focus on primarily audiotape concerns, we have grown to provide both audio and video materials, including our own efforts in video production. Video is extremely popular among language faculty right now at Michigan. They often approach us for help in creating their own materials. We do not have a studio, but the central media organization for the College does. In exchange for our helping with the media needs of non-language folks teaching in our building, they have given us privileged access to their large TV studio. They know that our staff is trained in video production, that their equipment will be handled properly and that our job will be completed on schedule. This sort of special arrangement has helped us a great deal and saved our standing in line to obtain needed services.

Film/Video Library: As part of the Graduate Library, the Film/Video Library collects materials for the entire University. We have collaborated with them in two ways. First, language faculty are very heavy users of video. We work with faculty to identify titles that are likely to be frequently used, and this information helps the Library to add materials, confident that they will not sit on the shelf. The Film/Video Library, which has a budget much larger than ours, will buy foreign language titles that are likely to have broad appeal. Our smaller budget can then focus on acquiring those materials that have more restrictive access either because they are in a foreign language without subtitles or have been developed primarily as

language teaching tools. Over the last few years, this collaborative arrangement has resulted in an enormous increase in the foreign language video materials currently available to Michigan faculty and students.

Second, all video titles are kept in a unified catalog that we created in collaboration with the Library. If a faculty member wants to check out something, we do all the leg-work to access the materials from the Film/Video Library and bring them over to our building, returning the materials after use. This provides good public relations with our faculty, but even more it helps to insure that they and their students have easy and reliable access to the materials when they need it.

Resources in the Dorms: Our lab is quite large, but the number of introductory students is larger still. In order to make it easier for students to get access to the audio and video materials being used in their language classes, we have helped to create listening and viewing centers in each of the dormitories. We work with the residence hall librarians to identify the materials that students need, and provide technical assistance if there is any problem with the equipment.

This arrangement has helped us—students can get access to what they need without having to stand in line or to walk across campus at night—and has helped the residence libraries, too, who are glad to document heavier patron use. Since certain materials can only be viewed in the LRC (e.g., materials for which we have only one or two copies), this helps us to minimize competition for use of the space.

Faculty Development: And finally, we also work cooperatively with several units on campus that provide faculty development. Most of these units provide some funding for materials development or course revision, but usually the grants are restricted in

one way or another: one might provide money for student assistants and not for faculty time; another might provide hardware or software, but not salaries. We work with faculty to put together a “package” of support from a variety of sources (including us) in order to enable a project to move forward. This cost sharing approach has worked out for us very well. Individuals working in other granting agencies now call me when a deadline is coming due and say, “I note that you don’t have anything coming in this year from languages, are you still planning to, because we can hold the deadline for you.” It’s really good to know that they are watching out for us now, expecting joint projects because we have been successful in the past in bundling our efforts with theirs.

The traditions which keep each unit separate, each competing with the other, are very long-standing at Michigan. Nevertheless, in these ways we are starting to see some hopeful new traditions emerge with respect to cooperation and collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the survey and the case studies demonstrate that cooperation, although difficult at times, is worth the effort in increased efficiency and sometimes the lowering of costs. In summary, there are a few steps the language media center can take to develop better communication and cooperation with other media units on campus. These include:

1. Develop an informal network of relationships with other media unit directors.
2. Determine some common, easily-achieved cooperative goals to serve as the basis for projects or tasks.

Cooperation Among Language Learning Centers

3. Promote discussion and communication on issues of common concern such as copyright, saving costs on supply or equipment purchases, communication to faculty etc.
4. Share information on new technologies and applications used by your faculty.
5. Pool resources for shared development projects of larger scale than single units can finance or administer alone.

Those campus media units that are open to change and communication are less likely to be overlooked when administrative changes come from above. Technology has already changed the way we teach our students and organize our centers. In fact, new technology highways are already making the concept of a geographic center obsolete in the very near future. *Carpe Diem.*

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Robin Lawrason is Director of the Media Learning Center at Temple University. Susan Clabaugh is Director of the Educational Technology Center at the University of Maryland, College Park. Trisha Dvorak is Director of the Language Resource Center at the University of Michigan, and President of IALL. Carmen Greenlee is Director of the Language Media Center at Bowdoin College. Jackie Tanner is Director of the Language Learning Technology Center at Georgetown University.