

**ITAC Special Grant Request:
A System for Audio Recording and Delivery ('Podcasting') in Large Classrooms
College of Liberal Arts**

Liberal Arts requests \$87,000 to develop an audio recording and delivery system for 26 large classrooms. Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services will partner with Fine Arts and DIIA to integrate recording and delivery with existing tools and systems.

Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services has seen recent growth in requests by faculty and students to record class sessions and making them available afterwards on the web. We have experimented with both audio and video recording. We believe that the correct solution for Liberal Arts is to provide the capability to produce audio recordings with accompanying slide shows based on instructors' Power Point presentations or other material used in class. Using audio solves several problems.

First of all, Liberal Arts manages nearly 200 technology and computer classrooms. Many of these are very large. Installing camera and other video infrastructure in this many rooms would be prohibitively expensive. On the other hand, all of our large classrooms and auditoriums are already equipped with microphones and other audio processing gear. Adding recording equipment and software is a simple and relatively inexpensive proposition. In addition, handling and serving the relatively smaller audio files will put much less of a load on network and server infrastructure. Existing Liberal Arts web servers should be adequate to meet the need.

Secondly, student privacy is better protected with audio recording. Students would undoubtedly be picked up on video at times, presenting us with legal issues we have not yet addressed. While we may run into similar issues with students' voices, the practical threat to privacy would be far less.

Thirdly, audio recordings provide a way for students to review lectures or catch up on missed class sessions, but don't constitute as complete an alternative to attending class as would video recordings.

Finally, students will find it more convenient to use audio recordings. When accessed on a computer or other device with a video screen, students could look at accompanying slide shows while listening. But students could also simply listen using their music players while, commuting, exercising, doing chores, or any other time when the mind is not occupied but watching a screen would be impossible or inconvenient.

The key to recording and delivering audio is to give faculty a simple and seamless control system. Instructors should have a single button to push that initiates the recording, places it on a server, and makes it available to the students enrolled in the course. Additionally, there should be "pause" and "resume" buttons so that instructor could choose not to record select sections of class. Faculty members also should have the option to "hold" recordings for review before publishing.

Recordings themselves would be in the popular MP3 format. Accompanied slide shows would be produced by grabbing output to the classroom projector – presentation slides, document camera projections, materials from the web, and screen shots from other software. Potentially, snapshots of the chalkboard could also be added.

Liberal Arts proposes to install audio recording systems with seamless control in 26 of our largest General Purpose Classrooms in Summer 2009. These classrooms contain a total 4254 seats used by tens of thousands of student each semester. The plan includes several rooms that are not located in Liberal Arts buildings, including the Art Auditorium, Belmont 328, and three large rooms in the North Office Building A. These 26 rooms are maintained and supported by Liberal Arts (with the exception of ART 1.102, managed by Fine Arts), but are used by every college in the University. Liberal Arts courses are actually in the minority in some of these rooms. And many of the Liberal Arts courses included are large service courses with the majority of the enrolment from outside Liberal Arts. The bang-for-the-buck from this approach is large, with broad impact around campus.

Check-out of portable equipment will be provided for users of other classrooms until funds become available to add them to the project.

The control system itself will be integrated with the EID system and the Registrars registrations databases so that both faculty and students will have automatic access to the appropriate materials. Faculty will be able to publish recordings to Blackboard, the Liberal Arts DASE system, or simply ‘pod-cast’ them to students. This control could also be used for future classroom video recording and LAITS will work with other projects around campus to avoid needless duplication of effort.

To accomplish these goals in 2008-9, Liberal Arts requests:

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| Software, supplies and equipment | \$52,000 |
| <u>Programming, 1/2 FTE</u> | <u>\$35,000</u> |
| Total Request | \$87,000 |

Liberal Arts will supply all labor for classroom installation, and all server equipment and administration. Liberal Arts will also assume recurring costs of supporting and upgrading systems. DIIA will assist with Blackboard integration and Fine Arts will take the lead on identifying integrating client software for classroom computers.

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