

**ITAC Special Grant Request:  
Innovation with Audio and Video Production  
College of Liberal Arts**

The College of Liberal Arts requests \$48,000 to support the next phase of innovation in the areas of video and audio production using its combination of proven experience, audio and video studio facilities, classroom technology, and staff expertise. Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services (LAITS) has spent the last decade collaborating with faculty to determine effective and efficient means of producing engaging audio and video. We now propose to expand these efforts by joining our media production experience with another area of success: the cultivation of talented students as media facilitators and producers.

Liberal Arts' Student Technology Assistant (STA) program has succeeded in providing rich learning experiences for students while increasing the productivity of our web design team. Our current STA program employs talented students who collaborate with faculty, under the guidance of experienced staff, on web-based and other teaching projects. This grant request would extend this success into the more specialized realm of video and audio production by hiring 4 RTF students with appropriate backgrounds and providing them with focused additional training to prepare them to work on a wide range of video and audio projects.

We have established another precedent for this strategy by hiring a small number of students in the past three years who have worked exclusively on video and audio projects. The results for both the students and the University inspired this proposed expansion. The first student hired solely as a video production assistant graduated in May 2007, and is now fielding offers from film production companies and political media firms. Our first student audio specialist, now a Radio, Television, and Film graduate, now works as a professional audio engineer.

These RTF students would help expand both video and audio production by assisting with projects that are under way and in the planning stages, helping to respond to future projects that faculty, following current trends, will inevitably propose, and provide the same kind of responsiveness to faculty requests that we have achieved with the STA-staffed web development lab. Liberal Arts will continue to support these services with regular staff supervision and the maintenance of up-to-date infrastructure.

**VIDEO PRODUCTION**

Video production and delivery is expensive and LAITS operates on the premise that it should be used where it can have the most impact per second. We also know that, despite the recreational use of sites like You Tube, students expect high production quality in assigned materials. In response to these preferences, we emphasize professional video recording and post-production deployed in two basic models -- long-form recordings of select events, lectures, and class sections, and short video clips integrated with other web content and application.

LAITS has had extensive experience with long-form video production. Given the cost, long-form video is most appropriate when extra value can be had producing instructional materials that can also be used for public affairs, outreach, and public education. Material should also have lasting value because of the significance of the event or the timelessness of the topic. The following three ongoing projects are examples of LAITS's use of long-form video:

- **The Texas Politics Speaker Series** section of the Texas Politics website presents leading lawmakers and political figures speaking on current topics and political history, and answering questions unrehearsed.  
([http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/html/pr/speaker\\_series.html](http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/html/pr/speaker_series.html))
- **The Jesus in American Culture** website presents the entirety of award-winning UT faculty member Howard Miller's history course.  
(<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/jc/index2.html>)
- **The Medical Ethics and the Holocaust** lecture series, sponsored by the Holocaust Museum of Houston in collaboration with UT's Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, presents 17 lectures by nationally recognized experts in science, medicine, ethics, and history. Upon the conclusion of the lecture series in January 2008, an archive of these events will be featured at the Schusterman Center website.

Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services has helped pioneer the integration of short video clips in web based instructional applications. This technique was highly innovative when we began 10 years ago and we believe it is still one of the most innovative use of video on campus. While long form video recordings are appropriate in some contexts, we believe that most instructional applications call for shorter pieces. Shorter, more focused video segments build on the recognition that Web users' attention spans are shorter than other media. Strategically designed websites with multiple short video pieces initiate more user interaction, and thus help avoid passive reception of material.

An instructional strategy that emphasizes short form video has been central to LAITS successful collaboration with programmatic foreign language instruction that has reached tens of thousands of students across the university in the last decade. Short video anchors the established French lower-division online instructional packages (Francais Interactif and Tex's French Grammar, at <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/fi/> and <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/tex/>), and is now being used in projects under development for German (<http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/dib/>), American Sign Language (<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/asl507/>), and Spanish (in pre-production) instruction. It is also integral to the online introductory government text Texas Politics (<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu>), which features excerpts from interviews with political participants from all levels of government and politics, from elected officials to student interns.

The short video format also facilitates the use of student subjects to bridge the psychological gap between student and subject matter. For example, Francais Interactif makes extensive use of students to convey lessons in vocabulary and grammar; and Texas Politics uses interviews with undergraduate interns to reveal the workings of government and politics from a student perspective. Amateur video – such as that shot by faculty while traveling – can also be effectively used when present in short clips integrated in professional web applications, an approach that has been particularly fruitful in American Sign Language and French instructional sites (see links above).

LAITS has also used approach public affairs and outreach applications such as the UT-wide Take 5 feature, which showcases faculty campus wide (<http://www.utexas.edu/oncampus/multimedia/video/?cat=12>), and the annual Constitution Day sites, which feature UT faculty discussing themes related to the US Constitution (<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/consitution>).

## **AUDIO PRODUCTION**

LAITS and its predecessors – the Language Lab and the Liberal Arts Media Center – have maintained an audio recording studio for decades. Thousands of hours of audio instructional materials have been produced and distributed on tape, CD, DVD, and the web. In addition to the ever-present demand for traditional audio services in language instruction, the growth of audio delivery over the Internet and on personal devices like the iPod have created new demands and new opportunities for audio production.

LAITS specializes in highly produced, high quality audio delivered over the Internet. Existing sites produced in the LAITS audio studio include:

- Cantar de mio cid (<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/cid/>), an educational tool that allows students to recognize the enormous conceptual distance between an oral narrative poem and the modern textual editions used in the classroom.
- Paradise Lost (<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/miltonpl/>), an annotated audiotext based on a centerpiece of literature courses at UT.
- Tá Falado! (<http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/brazilpod/tafalado/>), a podcast on Brazilian Portuguese pronunciation for speakers of Spanish
- Radio Arlecchino (<http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/ra/>), a podcast of aural Italian grammar lessons.
- The British Studies Lecture Series Archives (<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/britishstudies/events/>), which makes available recordings of international scholars speaking in one of UT's most well-respected academic lecture series.

The success of these projects has led to several new undertakings that require increased capacity, which could be created by adding appropriately trained students that could work both in the studio and on location. Major initiatives underway in language instruction

include new instructional packages for Spanish, German, and Persian. The success of the audio-recording model used in the British Studies Lecture Series has led to increased demand for audio recording of other public events. The language-instruction podcasts and the general interest in distributing instructional materials to handheld devices has dramatically increased demand for podcast recording. One example is Steve Friesen's Religion Report podcast, which he is currently recording in the LAITS studio (<https://webspace.utexas.edu/sjf365/www/Site/Podcasts/Podcasts.html>).

In addition to supporting projects in various early stages of production, we aim to emulate the success of our walk-in development lab in the area of audio and video services. Faculty members can walk into the web development lab and receive staff-supervised assistance from STA's on the spot; adding student assistants to the audio and video studios would enable the same kind of responsiveness to faculty and place innovative media production with easy reach of all faculty.

We request \$48,000 in ITAC funding for this program. Liberal will provide professional staff for management, oversight, and consulting, as well as all hardware, software, and studio operation and maintenance costs.

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