

# 2005-2006 Learning Technologies Grants Proposal

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## Project Information

The Language Resource Center Distance Learning Project

Project Title

Margaret L. Quesada, Assoc. Professor and Director Language Resource Center

Project Director

Romance Languages

Requesting Department

\$16,943

Amount Requested Year 1

0

Amount Requested Year 2

Project Director's Signature

## Proposal Endorsement Signatures

Department Head

Dean

Proposal Abstract (100-word maximum)

This project proposes the installation of a video conferencing system in the Language Resource Center which would allow language classes to communicate with remote classrooms, connecting UGA students with other students, professors and native speakers of their target languages across the globe. Students could moreover connect with host families prior to traveling abroad for overseas studies, while professors in literature, linguistics, film, culture and history could team-teach with colleagues from virtually any university, with students from both classrooms participating actively. This system could potentially give service to over 6,000 students enrolled in foreign languages and overseas studies programs across campus.

## **Section I. Project Description**

### **1.1. Nature of the Innovation**

This project proposes the installation of a video conferencing system in the Language Resource Center (LRC) in order to allow small to medium-sized classes to communicate with remote classrooms, thereby connecting UGA students with other students, professors and native speakers of their target languages across the globe. Language instructors and professors in literature, linguistics, film, culture and history could team-teach with colleagues from virtually any university with students from both classrooms participating actively. The system would allow instructors to send live presentations, video, web pages or any other PC content to remote classrooms. In addition, the system could enrich the study abroad programs, providing students with the means to prepare better for their international experiences by connecting them with their host families prior to traveling overseas.

The system proposed in this project uses dual channel technology which allows for simultaneous speaking; for video, the system employs a standard-based H.264 compression for high resolution images, movies or presentations. When connected to a computer, any PC content can be streamed over the conference system.

### **1.1. Rationale of Project**

The video conferencing system brings innovation to the language learning environment by providing unprecedented access to remote foreign classrooms, allowing for interaction with native-speaking classmates and instructors in real time. For overseas studies programs the VC system can connect students with host families and future instructors to help prepare them for the experience as well as assist them in maintaining those relationships upon returning home. The system would also allow students to participate actively in lectures given by native-speaking professors in other countries.

Online surveys of students and faculty conducted in the spring of 2005 and reports of actual use of the facilities reveal that one of the services the LRC should provide is access to remote classrooms and the possibility of participating in distance learning programs. In particular, the Portuguese language program of the Department of Romance Languages (DRL) is collaborating with the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) in their new undergraduate major and has already implemented a distance learning component into the curriculum, via email: the “e-pal program”. They have furthermore proposed holding regular video conferences with colleagues and classmates in Brazil, a program they have piloted using the video conferencing facilities of OISD. However, it is unrealistic to depend on OISD—a facility which services the entire campus—on a regular basis. Both technical and logistical problems would arise: on-site classroom support, scheduling conflicts, and the difficulty of relocating entire classrooms across campus. Professors and instructors in the Portuguese program have expressed the need for a video conferencing system in the Language Resource Center which would allow them to implement smoothly, and possibly expand, the activities planned for this distance learning initiative.

In addition, the coordinator of the African Languages Program at UGA expects that a similar VC program could be implemented as part of the Tanzanian overseas study program. Students would be able to connect with their host families before leaving home and thus begin the orientation process well in advance, greatly facilitating the transition to their new host country. This functionality could be readily expanded to the numerous other overseas language programs at UGA. In the Spanish program alone, there are over 3,500 students enrolled and the groundwork has been laid for implementing a virtual visiting lecture series with colleagues in Mexican and other Latin American universities.

Therefore, a video conferencing facility in the Language Resource Center could potentially service the distance learning components of many of the international and language programs housed in Gilbert Hall, Park Hall and Joseph Brown Hall, all located on the north side of campus.

## **1.2. Relevance of Project to University Priorities and to the Department of Romance Languages and the University**

The University of Georgia seeks to prepare students for competing in a rapidly expanding global society. The main page of the University's website states that "The University of Georgia is at the forefront of the globalization movement in higher education with a wealth of opportunities for international experiences" and that "we're producing graduates prepared to be world citizens—well informed, culturally sensitive and technologically sophisticated" (<http://www.uga.edu/aboutUGA/compete.html>). The statement emphasizes two areas of preparation for our students: knowledge of and sensitivity to their own and other cultures, and expertise in cutting-edge technology. The University of Georgia has already taken specific steps to ensure that these objectives be achieved. In the Provost's 2005 *Report of the Task Force on General Education and Student Learning* (<http://www.uga.edu/provost>), two recommendations which specifically address these goals are "Establish the expectation that graduating students will be able to communicate effectively in a second language" (Recommendation I.2.3) and "Continue to develop and expand international education opportunities such as exchange programs and low cost international classes and trips" (Recommendation I.2.4). While it is important to encourage students to take part in international programs, innovations in technology have made it possible to provide students with better preparation for that experience and to provide them cost-effective ways of taking part in real-life "immersion" opportunities here at home.

The DRL shares this mission in the teaching and learning of the Romance languages. Furthermore, the LRC seeks to give service to all of the language programs on campus in its goal to be the premier language resource center in the State of Georgia. The present project contributes to this mission with the development of user-friendly, innovative facilities that allow for dynamic and integrated learning experiences.

**Specific Courses Benefiting from Project**

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Surveys conducted in the departments of Romance Languages, Comparative Literature and Germanic and Slavic Languages suggest that the beginning, intermediate and advanced language courses would benefit most directly from a distance learning video conferencing system. These specific courses are:

- CHIN 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002
- FREN 1001, 1002, 1110, 2001, 2002, 2030, 2120H, 2600, 3010, 4010, 4630
- GRMN 1001, 1002, 1110, 2001, 2002, 2110, 2140H, 3010, 3020, 3380, 3500
- HIND 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002
- ITAL 1001, 1002, 1003, 2001, 2002, 2600, 3010, 4010
- JAPN 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002, 3001, 3002, 4110, 4120
- KREN 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002, 3001, 3002, 4001
- PORT 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002, 2600, 3010, 4010
- RUSS 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002, 3001, 3002, 4001
- SPAN 1001, 1002, 1110, 2001, 2002, 2030, 2120H, 3010, 3011, 3050, 4010, 4090, 4650
- SWAH 1010, 1020, 2010, 2020
- YORU 1010, 1020

**1.3. Number of Students Served**

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Currently, in the fall of 2005 there are 6,640 undergraduate students enrolled in language classes in the Departments of Romance Languages, Comparative Literature and Germanic and Slavic Languages and 178 graduate students enrolled in the Dept. of Romance Languages (there were no reports from the other departments). Thus, there are potentially over 6,800 students who could benefit from the present project.

Language Classes	Undergrad	Graduate	Language Classes	Undergrad	Graduate
Bamana	8		Korean	194	
Chinese	156		Portuguese	194	26
French	813	34	Russian	98	
German	346		Spanish	3653	114
Hindi	24		Swahili	98	
Italian	601	4	Yoruba	12	
Japanese	243		<b>Total</b>	<b>6,440</b>	<b>178</b>

**Section II. Budget**

**2.1. Proposed Budget for LRC Project 2006**

Item	Quantity	Total Cost	Requested from LTG	Other Sources
<b>Video Conferencing System</b>				
Polycom VSX 7000s IP (NTSC) Video Conferencing Unit with Media Center Cart	1	\$9,019	\$9,019	0
Polycom VSX 7000 Series, Network Module, PRI-TI, with cable	1	\$2,459	0	\$2,459 CLACS
SoundStation VTX 1000	1	\$1,169	0	\$1,169 CLACS
VSX People + Content IP Software license	1	\$1,424	\$1,424	0
Dell Latitude D810 Laptop (Intel P M Processor 780, 2.0 GB 533 MHz 2 DIMMS, 100 GB Hard Drive)	1	\$3,000	\$3,000	0
Installation	1	\$1,500	\$1,500	0
Technological training and support and first-year upgrades	1 year	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$3,628
<b>Total VC system</b>		<b>\$20,571</b>	<b>\$16,943</b>	<b>\$3,628</b>
<b>Space Allocation</b>				
Gilbert Hall Room 122 (approx. 900 square feet with large conference table and chairs and internet access)	1	0	0	DRL

**2.3. Budget Justification**

In the proposed budget, \$3,628 of the required funding is already approved. The CLACS at UGA received partial funding to install a video conferencing system in the Language Resource Center to support the overseas studies component of the Portuguese language program. This program forms part of the CLACS new undergraduate major in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

**Equipment purchase**

The Polycom VSX 7000s video conferencing system is the most ideal for small classrooms because it is capable of capturing audio and video for groups of up to 20 and is versatile and user-friendly. The dialing method can be IP, SIO or ISDN and upgrades are possible in allowing for the addition of extra cameras and monitors. By purchasing the SoundStation, we will eliminate the need for external microphones and improve the pickup range of soft voices from the far end of the conferencing room, a necessary feature for classroom video conferencing. The VSX People + Content IP software package permits the streaming of remote content from a laptop, document camera or VCR/DVD player; participants can view both the content and the speaker simultaneously as they would in an on-site classroom. The purchase of a laptop with a high-speed processor, therefore, is also necessary.

**Technical staff support**

At the present time the LRC does not have technical staff assigned exclusively to attend to the technological needs of the Center. There are two specialists assigned to the Romance Language Department but they have not received special training in the management of VC systems. In order to maximize the use of the VC system and encourage language instructors and professors of content courses to utilize the system, training and support will be necessary for the LRC staff, the DRL tech specialists, instructors and professors during the first year the system is implemented. It is expected that following the first year of operation, the LRC staff will be able to continue the training of instructors and faculty and will be available during VC sessions.

**Space Allocation** – The DRL will allocate a small conference room of approximately 900 square feet for the installation of the video conferencing system. The room is already wired for internet access, has a computer projector, VCR and DVD players and a large table and chairs.

**Project Timeline**

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Persons Responsible</b>
November-December 2005	Submit orders for equipment and software.	Margaret Quesada, LRC Director and Jerry Daniels, DRL Tec Specialist
January-February 2006	Install video conferencing system and implement technical training in system.	MQ, Gary Baker, LRC Assist. Director and JD
March 2006	Implement ongoing training sessions for language instructors and faculty.	MQ, GB and JD
March –May 2006	Schedule video conferencing sessions with Portuguese study abroad program.	Robert Moser, Asst. Professor of Portuguese and LRC staff
June 2006	Conduct surveys among instructors and students to assess use and impact of video conferencing system on learning process.	MQ and GB
August- December 2006	Expand use of VC sessions to all language programs, overseas studies and general faculty.	MQ and GB
December 2006	Purchase and install first year upgrades.	MQ and JD

**Section III. Learning Outcomes****3.1. Learning outcomes and how resources will be used to achieve outcomes**

It is expected that students, faculty and instructors will be able to utilize the video conferencing system to enhance the learning of languages by making interaction a more real-life experience. Research in language acquisition has shown that in order for successful learning to take place, learners must interact with speakers of the language in realistic ways. This is precisely the function of the VC system: students will be able to use the target language with actual speakers of the language in richly communicative contexts. In addition, motivation is another integral

component necessary for success in second language learning: by participating actively in authentic linguistic activities, students become more highly motivated to continue the learning process. It is our hope that learners will pursue contact with their international classmates on their own and seek out ways to communicate with them outside the classroom by email, instant messaging or by other network communication systems. We similarly expect that more students will seek out overseas studies experiences and continue those relationships upon returning home.

### **3.2. Methods of evaluation**

Throughout the semester, the LRC administrative staff will train and advise faculty, instructors and students in the use of the VC system. A record of the demand and use of the VC system will be kept. At the end of the semester, faculty, instructors and students will be requested to complete a written survey to assess the various factors of the system regarding ease of use, accessibility, flexibility, etc. and its impact on their teaching/learning experience and ways to improve this experience.

### **3.3. Potential applications to other academic areas**

The present project responds primarily to the needs of the Portuguese Overseas Studies program as part of the new undergraduate degree in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. The African Studies Program has also expressed an interest in making use of the VC system to connect students with their host families before embarking on their overseas program in Tanzania. We fully expect that, as distance learning programs become more accessible, other language programs from the Departments of Romance Languages, German and Slavic Languages, Comparative Literature and the Linguistics Program will make use of this innovative technology to enrich and enhance their students' language learning experiences. In addition, upper level and graduate courses in linguistics, literature and film could also benefit from a VC system by participating in classrooms, conferences and lectures given by specialists in their fields from remote sites.

## **Section IV. Support Plan (staffing and resources for continuing project following LTG funding)**

The LRC has two full-time faculty with half-time appointments to the Center. In addition, the DRL has two specialists who support the LRC in their technological needs. For the first year of the project, training and support will be provided by Polycom distributors. Following an initial training period, the DRL and LRC staff will offer support to faculty and instructors for VC sessions.