

# From the President

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Although this is the second column I write that appears under the heading "From the President," it is the first I write while actually in office as your IALLT President. I look forward to serving you and the organization that has made my professional life so much richer over the years.

Those of you who attended the IALL 2001 conference at Rice University in Houston, Texas this past May know that our organization remains vibrant, innovative, international, and "user-friendly." Claire Bartlett and her staff at Rice, as well as the program committee, led by Bruce Parkhurst, are to be commended for an exceptionally well planned and productive five days in Houston. (And thank you, Claire, for delaying Houston's torrential rains and terrible flooding until the conference had ended!)

IALL 2001 was also the venue where some notable changes in IALL's structure were announced. These changes, all very positive, are in large part due to the guidance and inspiration of Read Gilgen, outgoing president. Under his leadership, our organization has become an officially incorporated, not-for-profit organization which draws all associated benefits, including tax exemption. If you have not done so, I ask you to read Read's introduction and the full printing of our Articles and Bylaws that appear in the previous issue of the Journal.

The name of our organization, the International Association for Language Learning Technologies, remains unchanged. One of the by-products of the incorporation was the strong suggestion by our legal consultants that our acronym change to IALLT to better reflect our name. This change was approved by a full meeting of the Board & Council at our May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Houston. Over the next two-year period the transition from IALL to IALLT will occur gradually but surely.

Our incorporation, a development which reflects positively on the stature and sophistication of our organization, was not Read's only accomplishment. He also presided over the IALLT Survey, developed and executed so astutely by Monika Dressler, Reid Paxton (our new Web site Editor) and their team at the University of Michigan. If you have not completed this survey, so important to developing an understanding of who we are and where we are headed, please do so. You will find the link to this survey at our Web site, <http://iallt.org>. The results of the survey will provide a compass for our organization for years to come.

It was a pleasure for me to be part of a Board that witnessed such a productive period. I would also like to thank Chris Higgins, outgoing Programs Director, for his global perspectives and his work to keep our relationships with our affiliates strong, including CALICO, ACTFL, JET (formerly LLA), EUROCALL, TESOL and others. He also supported the IALL workshops conducted by experts within our organization.

I can assure you that IALLT's new Board is equally qualified to take on the issues that deserve our attention. Welcome to Peter Liddell, incoming President-Elect, and Harold Hendricks, incoming Programs Director. And special kudos are due to the remarkable and unflinching efforts of Lynne Crandall and Lauren Rosen, continuing as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Additionally, Council members such as Samantha Earp, our Journal Editor, play a pivotal role in our organization. These people serve you unselfishly and without reward, other than the satisfaction taken in leading a fine organization and its members.

I would like to address You, the member, the keystone of our organization. One of the main objectives during my presidency will be to stimulate increased membership and -perhaps more importantly- to encourage existing members to stay current. It is essential that you stay active and paid-up during "off-conference" years so that our financial house remains in order. This enables us to continue producing excellent quality publications, such as this Journal and the newly revised "Language Center Design Kit." It enables us to improve our Web site and to plan major events, and it allows us to be innovative. Thank you for your commitment.

As in all professional organizations, it is not only the financial capital but also the distribution of "intellectual capital" that is essential. Your ideas and your volunteer service provide the catalyst for change and innovation. Our objective is to continue

to be a leader in the field of language learning technology and its application in related media centers, and to focus on providing assistance to faculty, students and administrators who share our interests. To this end, I encourage you to share your knowledge and expertise with others. IALLT and its regional groups are completely volunteer organizations that draw strength from the contributions of their members. Consider writing for one of our publications, joining a task force, or applying for a Council position. As I pointed out at my inauguration talk at IALL 2001, I serve as director of a media center at a small private university with only student staff to assist me, so don't think that any role you play is too small or any issue insignificant.

As I write this, in recent weeks Lucent Technologies has laid off thousands of workers, JDS Uniphase has declared financial losses in the billions of dollars, and I believe that observers are not going too far in declaring that the "technology euphoria of the 1990's" has come to a sobering end. I take comfort in knowing that our organization is not only about technology, but about learning and teaching. Trisha Dvorak, who served as 15<sup>th</sup> IALL president from 1993-1994, once wrote, "Technology can be seductive, suggesting to us that are working toward a solution before we have really defined the problem..." Let's be sure that we stay focused on providing solutions which support specific learning and teaching objectives. I encourage you to examine critically new technologies and the "must-have" equipment, add then make prudent and cost-effective decisions based on real needs. If we take the long view, and provide solutions to valid challenges, our work will be appreciated in the long run.

Finally, while planning and communicating, don't forget to mark your calendar for IALLT 2003, June 17-21, 2003, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, or forget to take advantage of the regional group activities in your area.

I enjoyed speaking with many of you at IALL 2001. Auf Wiedersehen—until we meet again! Please feel free to contact me with your ideas or suggestions. My email is dpankra@luc.edu.

David

P.S. Several weeks after I wrote this column, our nation was confronted with the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the aftermath thereof. On behalf of the membership of IALLT, the Board

quickly and unanimously decided to make a contribution to the September 11<sup>th</sup> Fund. We felt it important to make a statement that showed our concern for the victims and our belief in the relevance of language learning and cross cultural communication. For details on the donation, please click on the "IALLT Response to the Events of September 11" at our Web site, <http://iallt.org>. In light of these horrific events, the importance of our work takes on increased significance as we strive to help all "citizens of the world" better understand one another. ♦