

From the IALL President

Nina Garrett
CTW Mellon Project



Nina Garrett

"We need to think about how IALL will change, too, as an organization. Any professional organization worth its salt both serves and leads its constituency."

I'm fascinated by the number and variety of job ads now appearing on LLTI and elsewhere for language technology specialists; I don't recall ever having seen so many in previous years, and I wonder what this upsurge implies for the profession and for IALL. It might only mean that more institutions are feeling the need to put in more computers and to have someone take care of them for "servicing" language departments. On the other hand it might represent an increasing recognition of the importance of language learning in "internationalizing" the curriculum, and a concomitant recognition of the potential role of technology in extending and enhancing language learning. I'd be interested in knowing in what proportion of cases the new language computing center replaces an existing audio language lab, how often it is planned to exist side-by-side with an audio lab, and how often it is an entirely new enterprise for an institution that has never had (or hasn't for years had) an audio lab. Are language departments and institutions thinking any differently about the functions and challenges of these new centers? Are their expectations of the new directors different, beyond looking for specific technological expertise? I'd love to hear from IALL members, especially those who are in new positions or applying for them, with their impressions of what is and is not changing.

We need to think about how IALL will change, too, as an organization. Any professional organization worth its salt both serves and leads its constituency. To what extent should we see our initiatives—publications, workshops, meetings—responding to and reflecting changes in the profession, and to what extent should we (or can we) position IALL to lead the way, to influence and shape the changes? This has always been an intensely grass-roots organization enjoying extraordinarily devoted and active participation by its members. Do newcomers to the profession—those who are taking on all these new positions—see IALL as their major professional resource

and leadership? If not, what can IALL do to strengthen its own ability to serve and lead the profession? The IALL Board would love to hear from you!■