2015 UAS Media Services Review

Introduction

UAS is in the process of conducting a review of the services provided by the UAS Media Services department. While, program reviews are a well-established means for evaluating academic programs, UAS seeks to expand this established process to include service areas. The UAS Media Services review is a priority due to the importance of technology in the classroom, the financial pressures facing the University of Alaska system, and the current staffing challenges. In addition, the review will help identify services that are no longer used due to older antiquated technologies as well as identifying new technology that will work – during both good budget times as well as bad. The reality is that we need to prioritize services and consider changes, which will allow UAS to deliver reliable, high-quality service with reduced staffing and reduced budgets.

As part of our review, UAS Media Services asked for supporting feedback through a survey to help identify:

- What services are currently used,
- The best things which we should try to preserve, and
- Changes that we should consider.

The contents of this document have been prepared collaboratively by the Academic Technology Manager, the Media Supervisor, and the Vice Chancellor for Administration. At the start, the goal has been to create a document which promoted transparency by prioritizing brevity and a holistic approach over a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of any single detail. Media Services is a valued and essential part of the campus and it serves many passionate stakeholders. Ideally this document can be easily read and shared by anyone interested in the Media Services and the future direction of the campus.

The Media Past, Present and Future

When UAS was formed in the 1980s, "media services" comprised one employee located in the bottom of the Whitehead building. The principle charge of the function was to maintain the simple AV equipment on campus at the time – principally televisions, VCRs, overhead projectors and push-to-talk audio conferencing conveners.

With the opening of the Egan Library and the creation of the broadcast studio, the focus of media services broadened to include production of synchronous distance-education classes delivered over satellite. As consumer and "pro-sumer" technologies became more cost-effective, UAS added checkout equipment and video editing workstations in order to support basic video production.

Because UAS as able to build up a sophisticated satellite video distribution infrastructure, external government agencies were attracted to UAS to lease space and pay for services. This entrepreneurial function was a significant funding source for the media area for many years, and helped to grow the staffing.

By the early 2000s, the media area began to focus on greater support for campus events and academic departments, including producing award-winning video content and high-quality video recordings for DVD and web streaming distribution.

Over the course of the past 25 years, two significant changes have driven change in the media area:

1. The rise of digital technologies has transformed many tradition analog "media" functions into IT functions. Examples include non-linear video editing, data projectors, digital cameras and the availability of internet streaming for video delivery.
2. The availability of media technologies for consumers has democratized the industry. Capabilities which previously cost tens of thousands of dollars are now available to anyone with a smartphone.

The impacts of these changes are seen at UAS in several ways:

- By necessity, most classroom technology support has shifted to IT technicians rather than media professionals.
- The demand for checkout media equipment has nearly disappeared.
- The demand for student video editing workstations, while never in high-demand, dropped to nearly zero.
- Nearly all of the studio-produced live classes have shifted to web streaming delivered from faculty offices – or even faculty homes.
- All government contracts have disappeared as agencies have been able to achieve their ends through lower-cost alternatives – eliminating an important funding source.

Looking ahead, there are two significant changes which should be considered:

First, while the media staff have been part of IT Services for more than a decade, their physical isolation has created obstacles to effective collaboration. The current placement of the Academic Technology Manager's office within the media area helps somewhat, but does not fully address the problem. During the next academic year, all of IT services (including media staff) will be moved into a newly-renovated collaborative work space in the lower Hendrickson building. This change is expected to increase efficiency and encourage greater collaboration.

Second, IT Services has already been reduced by over two full positons for FY16. One of the position reductions was in the media area and further reductions may be necessary as UAS anticipates even greater budget, staffing and space reductions over the next three years. Media no longer has the resources to support all their traditional functions. UAS must quickly decide what capabilities/services must be phased out in order to ensure excellence in those that remain.

Mission

The Media Services operations functions within UAS IT Services and is directly supervised by the Academic Technology Manager.   IT Services as a whole is directed by the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services.

Mission: UAS Administrative Services
Administrative Services provides leadership, essential services, and useful tools and information that enable UAS to achieve its purpose of excellence in teaching, learning and research.

Vision: Information Technology Services
The vision of IT Services is to help make the University of Alaska Southeast an exceptional place to learn, work and live by providing services and technology responsive to the needs of the university community.

Systems and Services

The media staff support the following services and infrastructural capabilities:

Services
- AV Troubleshooting
- Sound reinforcement setup
- Distance Education Support
- Video Production & duplication Services
- Media Transfers
- Live Broadcast

Infrastructure Capabilities
- Audio booth
- Studio classroom
- Satellite downlink
- Satellite uplink
- Streaming video servers
- Mobile video unit (for remote capture)

Support for UAS Mission

Student Success

Media staff support student success by:

- Taping student presentations for classes
- Making classroom content available to local and distance students
- Providing media expertise to the UAS community
- Provides productive and challenging student jobs

Teaching & Learning
- Produce live synchronous classes (UASlive!) in the UAS studio classroom.
- Assist faculty in creating content for course web sites or other distribution.
- Allows students to review classes online by viewing the class video archives.

Community Engagement

Media staff support community engagement by:

- Making campus events available to a broader audience by broadcasting them live and making recordings available afterwards
- Provides video productions of selected presentations to the university community as well as the local PBS station, and locals in Juneau
- Provides AV support for campus events
- Increasing the visibility of UAS through UATV

Research & Creative Expression

- Assist faculty research by transferring old media into a newer format so they can still be accessible in the future.
- Provides expertise and assistance to faculty and students with special scanning, printing or other media related projects.

SWOT Analysis

S T R E N G T H S	**Robust infrastructure:** UAS is one of the few remaining campuses which have capability for profession-quality video production. The studio classroom has been upgraded to support high-definition video capture and UAS has mobile video production units which allow capture of events across campus. **Strong campus partnerships:** Media Services has been able to coordinate efforts and support Evening at Egan and other symposiums. **Community Partnership:** Media Services has participated in activities which connect with the community, providing image advertising for UAS.
W E A K N E S S E S	**Lack of Awareness:** many stakeholders do not know what media does, or what services they provide. **Overhead Costs:** Broadcast quality equipment is expensive and quickly outdated. **Staffing:** currently not enough staff to cover all our needs, difficult to find employees that have all of the skills needed.
O P P O R T U N I T I E S	**Growth of Alternative Delivery:** programs like Adobe Connect and Google Hangouts can replace live broadcast classes which would allow media staff time to do other things. **Campus Renovation/Restructuring:** UAS has committed to looking holistically at campus organization and services. This provides opportunities to deliver services in new ways or seek opportunities for consolidation. **Increased Campus Partnerships:** there are untapped opportunities which media Services could explore such as GoToMeeting, Lifesize, Skype, etc.
T H R E A T S	**Rising Fixed Costs:** fixed costs, especially for personnel, have been steadily rising and are expected to continue into the future. **Increased Competition:** newer technology and software can be easier to use, requiring less help.

Media Services Stakeholder Survey

A survey was conducted during the Spring 2015 semester to gather the perspectives of the Juneau campus stakeholder groups. In order to facilitate data analysis, the survey was not anonymous; however, the names of submitters was kept confidential and not shared with media staff.   Invitations were sent to Juneau campus employees and anyone enrolled in a current Juneau campus course. This includes all students enrolled in eLearning courses.

Survey Structure

The survey was structured to focus on how stakeholders have used media services in the recent past, what they have appreciated, what they think should be kept, and what changes should be considered. The full report of the survey results can be found at:
https://online.uas.alaska.edu/mysurvey/?ref=RExDT0xMSU5TLTE&action=report
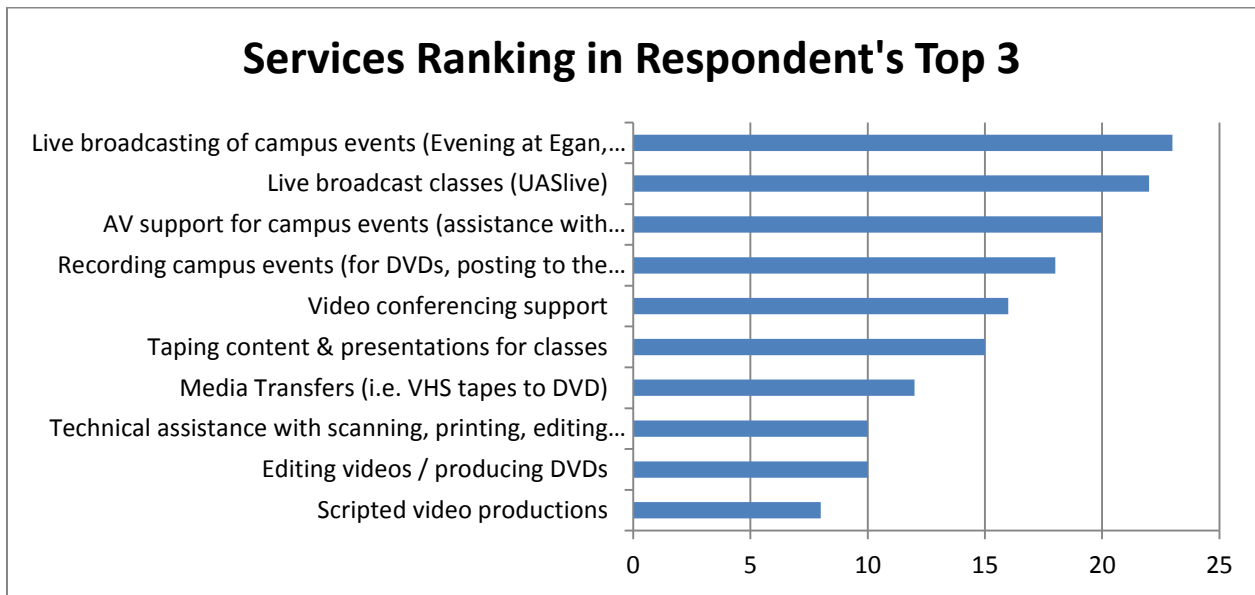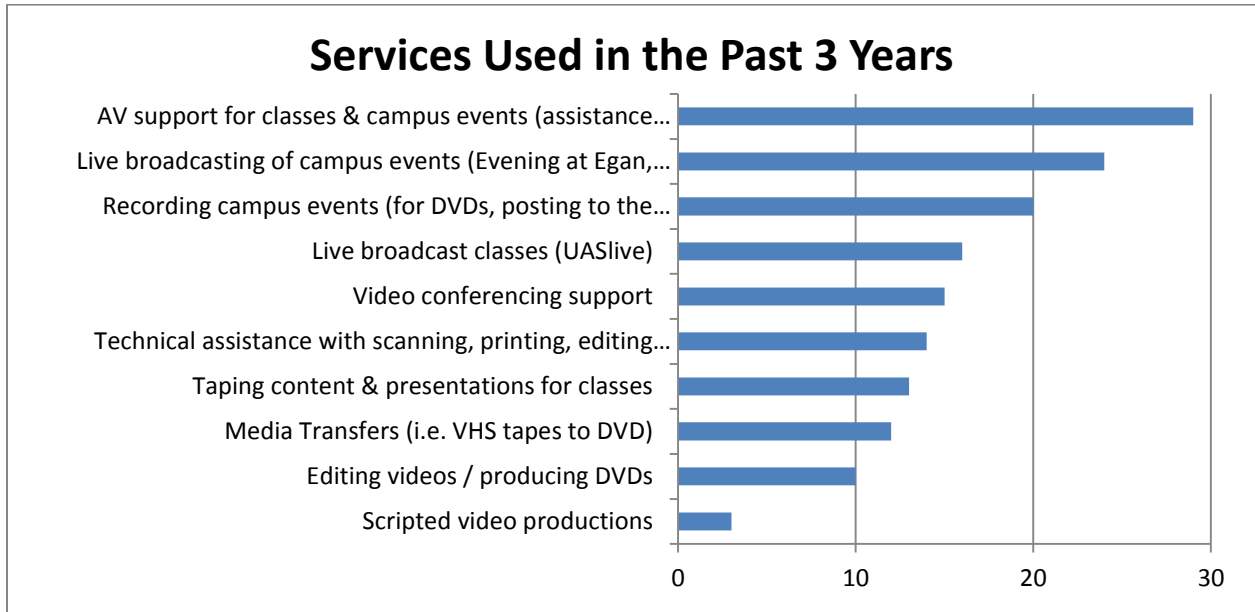
Summary of Findings

An analysis of each survey question is provided in the tables and graphs included at the end of this report. Overall, however, a number of interesting trends were identified in both the quantitative and qualitative responses:

1. Lack of awareness was clearly expressed in all areas of the survey. Many respondents expressed that "had I known you offered such services, I would have used them!"

2. Respondents occasionally had difficulty distinguishing media-provided services from services provided by other areas of IT. This highlights the degree that media and IT have become indistinguishable.

3. As a whole, respondents expressed great value in knowing that UAS possesses staff who have expertise in media technologies.

4. Despite the significant declines in the number of live-broadcast classes, there was significant appreciation of this service by a significant number of respondents.

5. There was significant, broadly expressed support for the support provided to campus events, including broadcasting, taping and general AV support.

6. There was also significant concern expressed that UAS keep up with changing technology trends.

Appendix A: Survey Data Analysis

Services Used in the Past 3 Years

Service	Value
AV support for classes & campus events (assistance…	29
Live broadcasting of campus events (Evening at Egan,…	24
Recording campus events (for DVDs, posting to the…	20
Live broadcast classes (UASlive)	16
Video conferencing support	15
Technical assistance with scanning, printing, editing…	14
Taping content & presentations for classes	13
Media Transfers (i.e. VHS tapes to DVD)	12
Editing videos / producing DVDs	10
Scripted video productions	3

Services Ranking in Respondent's Top 3

Service	Value
Live broadcasting of campus events (Evening at Egan,…	23
Live broadcast classes (UASlive)	22
AV support for campus events (assistance with…	20
Recording campus events (for DVDs, posting to the…	18
Video conferencing support	16
Taping content & presentations for classes	15
Media Transfers (i.e. VHS tapes to DVD)	12
Technical assistance with scanning, printing, editing…	10
Editing videos / producing DVDs	10
Scripted video productions	8

"What have you appreciated most about UAS Media Services?"

Unknown / Unsure	11
Event capture	7
Availability / Expertise	7
Responsiveness	5
Event support	5
UASlive	4
Classroom support	4

"Looking ahead, what services and capabilities should UAS strive to preserve?"

Event broadcast	15
AV support	9
Unsure	5
UASlive	5
Tech support	5
Classroom support	4
VC support	3
Distance support	3

"Looking ahead, how does media services most need to change?"

Outreach	12
New technology	7
Unsure	6
Empower users	2
Staff	2
Customer service	2
Clean up area	2
Distance support	2
Screening room	2