



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2016 Program Review

Anderson Language Technology Center

Academic Review and Planning Advisory
Committee Report

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Mac'.

04/14/17

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs: Date

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Process Overview

The review of the Anderson Language Technology Center (ALTEC) was conducted in accordance with the 2016 review guidelines. The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) conducts and writes the final reviews of all academic units on the Boulder campus. The unit prepared a self-study, which was reviewed by an internal review committee (IRC) of two CU Boulder faculty members. The internal reviewers found that the self-study was generally complete and accurate, but requested enhancements, which ALTEC largely provided. Other IRC comments are cited at appropriate points throughout the report. One external reviewer, a language center director from outside of the University of Colorado, visited the unit on April 11 and 12, 2016, with follow-up phone or Skype conversations on April 14 and 15, 2016. The external reviewer read the relevant documents and met with faculty, students, university administrators, and members of ARPAC. The external reviewer's comments and recommendations are cited at appropriate points throughout the report. This public document reflects the assessments and recommendations for the Anderson Language Technology Center as approved by ARPAC.

Academic Review
and Planning
Advisory
Committee
(ARPAC)

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Unit Overview

The Office of Data Analytics' (ODA) website does not have a standardized description of the Anderson Language Technology Center. The overview of ALTEC is taken from the unit's website. ALTEC was established in 1989, with a donation from the Anderson/Roubos Family. ALTEC is an academic support program whose stated mission is to broaden and to deepen the study of languages and cultures by providing access to a state-of-the-art, multilingual resource collection; to facilitate the incorporation of educational technologies into educators' pedagogy; to advocate for language study; to offer non-credit language classes to all; and to collaborate with departments to improve the acquisition of higher-level language skills in a variety of languages.

ALTEC is classified as a program within the Division of Arts and Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences and is officially charged to serve the Departments of Asian Languages and Civilizations, French and Italian, Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, Spanish and Portuguese, and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. ALTEC operates academic programs, assists instructors, operates facilities shared by language departments, and acquires and provides access to educational media. ALTEC has state-of-the-art technology for language learning and is housed in five rooms in Hellems Arts and Sciences and in one room in the University Club.

Expanding its scope in 2015, ALTEC began an association with the Modified Foreign Language Program (MFLP). The MFLP is a curricular modification for students who have difficulty learning a foreign language, and it assists these students in meeting the language requirement for the BA. The MFLP currently serves 170 students.

ALTEC also started the Elevate certificate program in 2015. The certificate is an online program consisting of six modules. The courses provide language educators with high quality, affordable, and flexible education in the theory and practice of educational technology. Seven students are currently enrolled in the program, and ALTEC expects the next cohort to reach the maximum capacity of fifteen graduate students.

In addition, ALTEC offers both CU Boulder and the local community short, non-credit language courses. From 2014 to 2016, 912 students enrolled in non-credit courses (289 from the broader community and 615 CU Boulder affiliates). Although the courses have a fee component, they require a yearly subsidy from the provost's office. In 2016, ALTEC reports that the program has already exceeded its yearly provost's subsidy by \$1,517 but that it has a "decent surplus" in its non-credit course account.

Personnel and governance

ALTEC currently has a staff totaling six full-time equivalent (FTE) employees: 3.0 professional exempt and 2.5 state classified staff. The professional staff include the ALTEC director, an MFLP program director, and a language technology coordinator. There is also an IT manager, an IT technician, and a resources coordinator. ALTEC has bylaws that govern the operation of its program committee. The committee represents the interests of students in the Departments of Asian Languages and Civilizations; French and Italian; Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures; Spanish and Portuguese; Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences; and the Division of Continuing Education. The committee develops guidelines, reflected in the bylaws, concerning the use of the ALTEC program fees and oversees fee expenditures. The committee comprises a student and faculty

member from each of the listed departments. The ALTEC director chairs the committee.

The external reviewer's report addresses staff needs by suggesting that ALTEC adjust its leadership and internal communication by building a sense of community, increasing transparency, engaging staff in mission-directed goal setting, and conducting regular staff meetings.

ALTEC reports that its staff is active in giving presentations at the local and national level. ALTEC has expressed an interest in establishing a research agenda addressing identity and language study persistence and the intersection of these factors with diversity and inclusion. Additional topics of interest include research on the Elevate program and work with the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program (FTEP). ALTEC did not identify which of its people would be engaging in this work.

Undergraduate education

According to the internal reviewers, "ALTEC's work in promoting an understanding of new developments and research in second language acquisition, and in providing a test bed for new pedagogy, is unique and valuable."

ALTEC also promotes online language learning in the Directed Independent Language Study (DILS) program, which provides students with non-credit and for credit help with languages too small to teach locally. ALTEC points to its efforts to work with Nordic Studies to revive for-credit courses in Swedish and possibly Norwegian, to its work with Jewish Studies to provide Yiddish instruction, and to its development of a variety of non-credit courses in such languages as the Amdo-ge dialect of Tibetan, Czech, Hungarian, and Nepali. These efforts are by

their nature interdisciplinary, linking ALTEC with scholars in a variety of fields.

ALTEC has identified two concerns regarding undergraduate education that need to be addressed beyond the help it currently provides with its Modified Foreign Language Program (MFLP): declining enrollments in language classes and the possibility that language requirements keep students from graduating. ALTEC believes all students are capable of learning a second language and aspires to have a program that has no failing students. The internal reviewers point out that ALTEC continues to communicate with language departments and other relevant units on campus to increase program awareness but that ALTEC needs a strong tenured faculty member/administrator to champion its activities.

Graduate education

The external reviewer notes that because so few TTT faculty were aware of the training programs ALTEC offers, ALTEC was underutilized in training graduate instructors. ALTEC currently has two programs for graduate students and experienced language instructors. Firstly, ALTEC offers the Elevate program, which is a 16-credit, fully online graduate certificate in the theory and practice of using technology in the language classroom. The program currently enrolls seven students and has the capacity for fifteen. Currently, ALTEC is exploring a partnership with the Elevate program and the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL). If ACTFL endorses the Elevate program, ALTEC believes the number of students interested in completing the program would increase significantly. The internal review report notes that Elevate is a potential revenue generator but that its costs and potential revenues are not yet understood. Secondly, ALTEC offers the Foreign Language Technology

Program, a non-credit, online resource for faculty instructors and graduate students.

ALTEC has plans to offer a translation certificate and another on language classroom technology integration. The latter certificate would require hiring a new language technology expert and creating an additional instructor position.

Budget

ALTEC has three basic funding components. The College of Arts and Sciences pays staff salaries from the CU Boulder general fund. A \$15,000 operating budget pays for ALTEC staff professional travel. A \$20 program fee charged to language students generated \$107,537 for ALTEC in AY 2016-2017. That money, plus a subsidy from the provost, funds non-credit courses. ALTEC also may have funds from its original endowment.

The internal review report notes that ALTEC needs to clarify its budget and funding, and ARPAC agrees. ALTEC has started a process of budget analysis, and it is imperative that this process be completed.

Space

ALTEC has six staff offices, one multi-media library, two classrooms, and three small rooms. One of the classrooms (Hellems 145) is a Macintosh lab affiliated with the Office of Information Technology, while the other classroom is a Windows lab. ALTEC keeps the Macintosh lab and media library open for over 50 hours per week. ALTEC's facilities in Hellems are well-used by students and other clients. Funding for remodeling the multi-media library recently has been approved. However, the internal review report found that the space for staff was "simply inadequate," particularly in the lack of soundproofing. The Modern Foreign Language Program (MFLP) is located in the

University Club building. While ALTEC finds the distance between its two locations disruptive, the MFLP needs to insure the privacy of its services, and currently the only solution is to house it apart from the rest of ALTEC.

Inclusive excellence

ALTEC is proud of its diverse staff, which is more than half women and 80 percent foreign born. Its student staff of nine includes four members of underrepresented groups. ALTEC considers itself a “living laboratory for learning about intercultural communication.” Workshops, including those of the second language reading acquisition group, address the contested and contingent nature of cross-cultural interaction, speaker identity, and language acquisition. Next steps for ALTEC include producing curricular materials and extracurricular events that address the problems of inter-cultural communication. The Directed Independent Language Study (DILS) program promotes diversity by allowing students to study less-commonly taught languages. While the Center of Western Civilization has helped with funding for DILS offerings in European Languages, ALTEC would like the university to help financially with those parts of the DILS program that teach African, Asian, or indigenous languages of Oceania and North and South America. ALTEC would also like the university to incentivize teachers to attend a specially designed diversity and inclusivity second language acquisition workshop.

Past Reviews

ALTEC last underwent program review in 2009. At that time, ARPAC found that “ALTEC meets an important need on campus by effectively assisting in foreign language instruction. It provides unique expertise, resources, and training in the use of technology to support language learning that would not otherwise be available.” ALTEC was tasked with continuing to develop the DILS program, which it has done. It also has developed the Elevate program, to assist in graduate student training. Suggested upgrades to the servers and classroom renovation also have taken place.

ALTEC was asked to work with the library first to link its holdings, a task which has been completed, and second to reduce purchasing redundancy—a project still in progress. ALTEC was asked to explore the feasibility of developing a tenure-track faculty-led language learning MA in conjunction with the School of Education. That recommendation seems to have been dropped in favor of pursuing a professional master’s certificate through ALTEC. The College of Arts and Sciences was asked to establish an advisory board with broad representation from units on campus that could benefit from ALTEC’s services. ALTEC reports that it had an advisory committee in the past but that it is no longer active.

Campus Context

ALTEC is an active language technology center that provides a wide range of services to undergraduate and graduate students, staff, faculty, and community members. The external reviewer notes that everyone “praised ALTEC and its staff for the welcoming and accommodating environment, their innovative language learning and teaching support services and their valuable professional development opportunities.” ALTEC’s work “goes beyond that of a language technology center and embodies current best practices of language centers.” The self-study highlights three areas of the university’s Flagship 2030 goals to which ALTEC contributes. First, ALTEC is “Investing in the Tools of Success” by bringing technology to bear on increasing access to multilingual resources. Second, ALTEC contributes to “Learning for a Diverse World” by expanding campus language offerings. Finally, ALTEC serves “Colorado, the Community and Our Graduates” by making non-credit courses open to the community and increasing outreach for professional development to K-12 teachers through the Elevate program.

National Context

The center's accomplishments compare favorably to those of peer centers, according to the external reviewer's report. In addition to the resources offered by most language centers, the external reviewer notes that ALTEC has programs that stand out and speak to "ALTEC's strength and drive to innovate." To promote professional development, for example, ALTEC's Foreign Language Technology program, the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) reading group, locally hosted conferences. The external reviewer suggests a few new directions ALTEC could take, including offering microcredentials and badges, providing more language advocacy, and increasing its non-credit language offerings.

Analysis

The Anderson Language Technology Center is exceptional in many ways. The external reviewer places ALTEC among the top modern language centers that “represent collaborative, innovative, and flexible spaces that encourage engagement with language and culture to foster high levels of proficiency and cultural awareness.” The internal reviewers note that the faculty who work with the center are “enthusiastic about the services and supports that ALTEC provides,” which include “operating academic programs, providing assistance to instructors, operating facilities shared by language departments, and acquiring and providing access to educational media.” Again, the external reviewer praises the staff’s friendly demeanor, open-door policy, and “unwavering willingness to find solutions and provide support.”

ALTEC has given a great deal to the campus, but it is at a point where it needs to concentrate on what it can do best. Both the internal and the external reviewers suggest that ALTEC should focus its energies and streamline its vision. As with many non-departmental units, there is a tendency to reach too broadly to contribute, especially as the unit’s scope is not as clear as, say, that of academic departments. ALTEC also needs to secure its relations with the departments it serves and with those that are thus best able to support its mission. To that end, the external reviewer suggests an external advisory board, which is in alignment with the 2009 ARPAC report’s recommendations.

ALTEC acknowledges, and both the internal and the external reviewers note, that the center needs to collaborate more with the language departments. At the same time, the reports suggest that ALTEC’s “open door policy and can-do attitude” and its generosity in “supporting new initiatives proposed by faculty” have stretched the center to the limit. ALTEC needs to

“streamline” its vision and mission by evaluating activities and discontinuing programs that fall outside a narrowed scope. ALTEC should focus its energies on supporting language instruction.

Undergraduate and graduate education and support

ALTEC supports both undergraduate and graduate education directly by working with language departments on language development and language maintenance. Its most basic services, typical of a language technology center, include providing technology-enabled classrooms and offering equipment and media that can be checked out. In addition, the external reviewer’s report praises ALTEC as a broader language center that provides “collaborative, innovative, and flexible spaces that encourage engagement with languages and culture to foster high levels of proficiency and cultural awareness.” The Foreign Language Technology Program supports training in technology integration in language instruction for graduate students and faculty. The Modified Foreign Language Program for students with learning differences and the Directed Independent Language Study program for learning languages not regularly taught on campus are two examples of innovative programs that support undergraduate and graduate education.

While appreciating ALTEC’s work to offer a range of instructional opportunities, ARPAC is concerned that master’s certificates are being offered by staff. All master’s certificates need to be overseen by a tenure-granting department. Curricular design should not be undertaken without faculty input.

The Elevate certificate is being offered through the Division of Continuing Education, so graduate students cannot apply their tuition waivers to take courses for it. This limitation should be considered in strategic planning. For both undergraduate and

graduate offerings, ALTEC should work with its advisory board, which should include tenure-track faculty and instructors from each of the language departments. An appropriately staffed advisory board should also undertake the work of building community among language instructors.

Budget

Because of the variety of ALTEC's activities, the internal review report notes that "its finances are complex." ALTEC has started the process of analyzing the sources of its funding, the programs it runs, and the costs of those programs so that it can be confident of the current state of its revenue streams and expenses when it undertakes strategic planning and programmatic review. Budget analysis will better support funding requests. For example, the MFLP increased ALTEC's staff by one member, and ALTEC now would like an additional \$1,000 to fund that employee's travel. ALTEC uses its program fee budget to pay for library resources, library student employee salaries, online instructional resources and software, and computer equipment relevant to language instruction. Because of declining enrollments in language courses, the student fee budget has suffered, and ALTEC is unable to make appropriate computer upgrades on its own. In addition, although the number of student employees has been cut, according to ALTEC, student salaries lag behind other units and Association of American Universities (AAU) medians. ALTEC requests an increase in the student fee from \$20 to \$30, and they expect to make that proposal in AY 2017-2018. That proposal will not be able to be evaluated before the completion of a detailed budget covering all ALTEC's programs. Other funding issues raised by ALTEC, such as regularizing the proficiency exams budget, will also benefit from closer analysis.

The external reviewer's report notes that funding was needed for the DILS program. ARPAC believes that the DILS program is

valuable and that all units on the campus would benefit from its stable, yearly funding. The external reviewer also notes funding needs to expand course design grants; currently only one grant is given each year, although demand for these grants is much higher. After strategic planning and detailed budget analysis, ALTEC may be able to identify the funds to support these proposals.

If, after strategic planning and programmatic review, ALTEC decides that it wishes to innovate with microcredentials and badges, increased advocacy, and further community outreach, then the center should assess its needs and ask for a one-year staff position, possibly a graduate student, to allow senior staff members to focus on broader program implementation.

Space

ALTEC would like a separate administrative assistant office. The existing space is substandard and in need of soundproofing, among other fixes. The external reviewer's report highlights staff issues that might arise from the conflict outlined above between ALTEC's generosity and responsiveness and its need to streamline. Staff need to know what ALTEC's vision is so that they can feel that they are a part of that vision. The external reviewer's report suggests increased transparency, making staff part of goal-setting work, and holding regular staff meetings. These suggestions can be implemented immediately, and staff involvement in strategic planning and programmatic review will help build a sense of community that will favor better future goal-setting.

Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) address the following recommendations to the Anderson Language Technology Center (ALTEC) and to the offices of the dean and the chancellor. It is the committee's intention that the recommendations serve to benefit program improvement and development and to further the mission of the University of Colorado Boulder.

To the unit

1. Undertake strategic planning and programmatic review to streamline the center's mission and to allow the center to focus on those programs which are in alignment with that mission;
2. Complete detailed budget analyses that clearly show sources of income and programmatic expenses and that outline the numbers of users for each program;
3. Reconvene a faculty advisory board, with both TTT and instructor-rank faculty from affiliated academic departments, and involve the board in the strategic planning and programmatic review;
4. Use the input from the faculty advisory board to increase collaboration with relevant departments in line with the strategic plan and mission;
5. Submit a proposal for improving staff space, including dealing with soundproofing issues;

6. Increase the transparency of internal communications, conduct regular staff meetings, involve staff in strategic planning, and engage in goal-setting, per the first recommendation;
7. If, after completing the strategic planning and programmatic review process, the pursuit of a professional master's certificates is indicated, work with a tenure-granting unit to sponsor the certificate and work with the appropriate faculty from that unit on curricular design;
8. Continue to work with the library to coordinate collections;
9. Consider requesting a tenure-stream director who will be able to advocate for ALTEC.
10. Recognize that ALTEC is a service center within the College of Arts and Sciences, and arrive at an appropriate model for providing supervision, evaluation, and support;
11. Support ALTEC's budget analysis, strategic planning and programmatic review, and help in the appointment of tenure-track faculty and instructors from each language unit that ALTEC supports to a faculty advisory board;
12. Set up a mechanism to regularly fund the DILS program, and set up a procedure for affiliated units to submit yearly requests for a DILS program support;
13. Work with ALTEC to determine if having a tenure-stream director will help the center move forward with its vision and mission, including increased campus advocacy and

To the dean of the College of
Arts and Sciences and to the
provost

collaboration. If a tenure-stream director is a viable solution, create such a position.;

14. Grant ALTEC's request for funds for space improvements, including for soundproofing.

Required Follow-Up

The director of the Anderson Language Technology Center shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2018, 2019, and 2020) to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the dean shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the college. The provost, as part of the review reforms, has agreed to respond annually to all outstanding matters under her/his purview arising from this review year. All official responses will be posted online.