

Hi-tech teaching

Jorstad brings innovative teaching methods to the classroom

Classrooms on campus today look a lot different than they did when Jim Jorstad was an undergraduate at UW-L in the '70s. And Jorstad, '78, is one of the major reasons why.

Jorstad is a leading force in bringing the university's classrooms into the 21st century — complete with video projectors and visualizers, computers with World Wide Web access and DVD playback, phones and VCRs. Gone are podiums, overhead projectors and movie projectors.

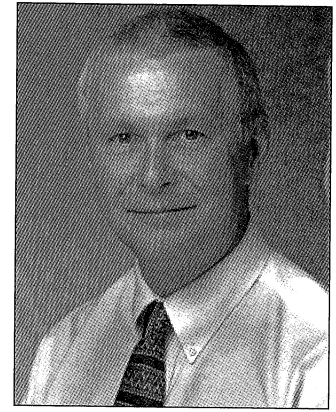
Instead, ETC (Educational Technology Console) and technology podiums designed by Jorstad are in the front of classrooms. The consoles allow teachers to not only work with the new media devices, but also the learning environment, including lighting, projection screens and sound.

"We are constantly looking at ways to make instruction better," explains Jorstad, director of UW-L Media Services. To do that, he not only draws from his educational background in instructional technology, but also works with faculty and instructional academic staff to make their teaching more effective. This drive to provide cutting-edge technology is just one of the reasons Jorstad's peers selected him to receive the university's 1998 Academic Staff Excellence Award.

Jorstad says faculty with prior experience with new instructional technologies have embraced the new equipment. Others are quickly adjusting. Most are asking for more features. "It's a good feeling to go in the classroom and see that faculty — both young and old — are using the equipment," he notes.

Along with giving more options while teaching, Jorstad has served as a catalyst in getting the campus on-line. He chaired the committee that designed the university's first WWW home page, and heads a group that is updating it.

Jim Jorstad



- **Director of UW-L Media Services since 1984**
- **President of the Wisconsin Educational Media Council, 1998**
- **Master's of Instructional Design and Technology, University of Iowa, 1982**
- **Bachelor's of Science in Mass Communications, UW-La Crosse, 1978**
- **1998 UW-L Academic Staff Excellence Award**
- **Wisconsin Public TV broadcasts:**
 - 1993 "Battle at Bad Axe"
 - 1991 "Forest of Gold"
 - 1990 "Midway—A Vision of the Past"

Jorstad also introduced distance education to campus. In 1995 he debuted UW-L's first distance education classroom, and organized the university's first compressed video class transmission. In the fall of that year, he linked the state's WONDER network connection on campus.

Jorstad organized the first ever UW System compressed video transmission for a UW Board of Regents statewide hearing in 1996. Two years later, he oversaw the first international video transmission on campus, which linked UW-L faculty with colleagues in Dubna, Russia, to discuss environmental issues.

Jorstad also designed and coordinated the installation for the second distance education room on campus in Morris Hall, and is planning a third in North Hall. This latest technology allows UW-L students to take classes previously not offered on campus, while transmitting courses not available at other UW campuses.

"Through distance education we're extending the boundaries of campus," he notes. Jorstad adds that he is busy integrating web-based distance education courses.

When Jorstad arrived on campus in 1984 — before the major technology push in the classroom — he quickly became known for his video production. Three of his works eventually aired on Public TV. His favorite, "The Battle of Bad Axe," tells the story of the conflict that shaped European settlement of western Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest. The program took nearly two years to complete. Along with the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, the production involved numerous community groups.

Jorstad believes customer service is important. "One of the most important things for me is to make sure clients get what they need," he says. "Technology for technology's sake does not guarantee success. What really makes a difference is that we identify a need, offer excellence in production, and provide exceptional customer service. Putting all these together makes for continual success."

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