

TLT Turns Gross Anatomy Lab into “Smart Classroom”

When the University's Medical School wanted to revamp the audio-visual capabilities of its Gross Anatomy Lab, it turned to Teaching and Learning Technologies (TLT) for advice. Greg Gardella came up with an innovative plan to solve some teaching problems in the lab where medical students learn anatomy by dissecting cadavers.

Students can now easily see procedures being demonstrated on four 8-foot screens around the room and hear their instructors on speakers over each dissection table. Greg's design also lets them videotape the entire 4-hour lab session and burn it to a DVD, so students have it for review.

Greg credits a TLT team effort, including a/v technician Bertz Llaguno, who provided technical support, Ron Lee, an engineer who designed the room's control system, and Bill Oberding, who coordinated with the medical school, Facilities management, and the outside contractors who completed the installation of equipment.

“Anatomy is a very visual science and students can



Revamped Lab — Students are now able to view techniques projected on 8-foot screens around the room by simply looking up. Speakers above each table also allow them to hear their instructors more easily. — Photo from the School of Medicine

really learn easier with these new audio-visual aids,” says Bob Hamann, director of the lab. “Now we can project live video or show PowerPoint presentations, clips from DVDs, or overhead projections of radiographs, MRIs, and CT scans. No matter where you are in that room, you can see two of those screens.”

Greg's a/v upgrade cost a relatively modest \$50,000 of the \$600,000 cost to renovate the laboratory's ventilation system. Each dissection table now has 18-inch ducts to remove fumes from the lab, making it safe for students to stay there much longer than before.

With both upgrades, Hamann says it is now the top such lab in the country and other university medical schools are extremely interested in what they have done. In fact, a group of representatives from West Coast medical schools have asked to tour the facility in February 2005.

Another Big Project for TLT — Hamann has another project in mind for Greg, coordinator of audio-visual technology for TLT. Because the medical school is growing, the university is considering adding another state-of-the-art lab onto Manville Health Science and then turning the current Gross

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Anatomy Lab into a Medical and Surgical Training facility, where surgeons from all disciplines can be trained on the latest advancements in surgical instrumentation. He said 20 more medical students will be admitted over the next 2 years beyond the 52 already enrolled and they will need more space.

This new combined lecture hall and dissection laboratory will have three tiers, 25 dissection tables with stationary desks, x-ray screens and data

drops for the students' laptops, and can accommodate 100 students. He wants Greg to make sure it has the best audio-visual capabilities, as well.

Funding for the new lab shouldn't be a problem, Hamann said, because the project is being driven by the local orthopedic medical community. He noted that some of the country's top orthopedic surgeons are in this area because of the U.S. Ski Team at Lake Tahoe and their interest "leveraged" the need for a Fresh Body Lab. Private funding is

expected to cover the cost and no public expenditures will be needed.

Once built, this new lab will be the only such facility on the West Coast and one of only three in the nation. The two others are at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and in Chicago. Hamann is excited about the prospects for the University of Nevada, Reno and in changing perceptions about the area in general. "I think northern Nevada will begin to be known for a lot more than gaming," he adds with a smile.