



# A United Vision

The newsletter that helps professionals communicate more effectively

## Using video production to teach higher level skills

*Couch potatoes need not apply to York's broadcast video program*

by Don Kreski

"Academic rigor" and "television" are terms not always used together, but at York Community High School in Elmhurst, they fit well.

"Some of our students sign up because they think it's an easy way out of our speech requirement," says Dave Venetucci, who teaches broadcast journalism at York. "They don't realize how tough it is."

Venetucci, a journalism and speech instructor with a background in television news, is now in his third year teaching basic and advanced broadcast courses. The goal of the program, he says, is as much to develop students' writing, planning and thinking abilities as their technical media skills. The chance to produce television programming is the bait that lures these teens to challenge themselves. They often find they have much more ability than they thought.

### A step by step program

York offers two semester-long production classes. In the first, mostly sophomore and junior-year students learn the basics of broadcast journalism. Using a step by step approach, Venetucci takes them through the

*continued on p.6*



## FUNDRAISING

page 3

FOR

## TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

*Digital television and you*

page 2

## Aircraft simulator at heart of UAL training efforts

*United Airlines upgrades its onboard training program with unique a/v systems*

by Don Kreski

The idea of multi-media instruction is talked about in many corporations. But staff at the United Airlines Training Center take the concept very seriously. The Center, located in Elk Grove, Illinois, is where the airline trains all of its new flight attendants. In a seven-week introductory class, staff use almost every type of instruc-

tional media, but they don't stop there.

"It's a very, very intense program," says Doug Tulp, Senior Staff Rep for Instructional Design for United's Onboard Service Training Division. "Hours are long, and we have a nice mix of computer-based, video and classroom training. But for us, that's not enough. We need a place for stu-

*continued on page 4*





# Technical Tips from United Visual's Service Department

## How will digital television impact your TV, VCR and video projector purchases?

by Bob Carlson

You may have read about recent Federal Communications Commission approvals regarding digital TV, which have laid the groundwork for conversion of all television broadcasts to digital. You're probably aware that, when digital broadcasting begins, we will be receiving clearer pictures and CD-quality sound. But a number of customers have asked me, "what happens to our current televisions and VCRs?"

Beyond all the hype and buzzwords is the reality that current analog broadcast signals will eventually become a thing of the past. Still, the timeframe for conversion gives us at least until December of 2006 before broadcasters go all-digital. During the transition, stations will begin broadcasting on two channels, one in digital and the other in analog. As a matter of fact, at the end of July Congress threw out the FCC's firm transition

date in favor of a three-part test that, according to the Los Angeles Times, "virtually insures that most broadcasters will hold on to two TV channels" well beyond 2006, and possibly forever. There is no reason to panic.

But what happens when the transition is eventually made? To start with, digital TV transmission will have a direct effect only on devices which actually have a tuner in them, such as televisions and VCRs. This fact eliminates concern on nearly all projection systems, both LCD and CRT types, as well as data and video monitors. Even after 2006, you will only need a newer, digital compatible source for your projector or monitor, such as a feed from a digital tuner, an updated VCR, laserdisc or DVD player. The only thing that may make your current projection systems less than perfect is that the screen aspect ratio will probably be a bit wider than today's standard, giving you a black stripe on the top and bottom of your projected image.

For current TV receivers and VCRs to work, you will need, and see on the market, digital television signal converters. These will be

similar to the cable box you may use now to receive scrambled premium cable channels, or to receive satellite TV programs. These converters are predicted to cost from \$100 to \$300. Typically, however, electronic devices tend to drop in price rapidly after introduction. The prices on the new digital televisions will have to drop pretty quickly, too, since the first, promised for the end of 1998, are expected to cost from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Should you hold off purchasing televisions and video recorders until the new digital models are available? For now, I wouldn't suggest it, unless your business requires you to be on the cutting edge of technology, regardless of the cost. It will be more than two years before all of the larger TV networks start broadcasting in digital, and even longer before cable companies are ready to do the same. When you take into consideration the life expectancy of current VCRs and TVs, it becomes apparent that most of today's purchases will be ready for replacement by 2006. Those that aren't will still be usable in some manner for many more years to come.

## A projector so light you can take it anywhere

—especially now that you can afford to—



First we made an SVGA notebook projector light and portable enough to take on the run. Then we made it considerably less expensive than anything comparable. And just like our entire family of projectors, it's incredibly easy to use.

You'll get all the power and brightness you need and 800 x 600 resolution. Best of all, at a mere 9.3 pounds, you can take it anywhere you want.

Call United Visual for a demonstration.

LIGHTWARE





# FUNDRAISING FOR TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

by Val Stewart, former Executive Director,  
The District 205 Foundation, Elmhurst

In times of fiscal belt-tightening, when schools all across America are faced with tax caps, failed referenda, growing enrollments and aging buildings, finding funds for technology-rich projects like the York Creativity and Broadcast Communications Centers might be the biggest challenge of all. Computers, audio/video mixers, editing systems and camcorders are often the first items cut from a strained district budget.

In an effort to provide funding for such innovative projects, local citizens, parents and top administrators from District 205 in Elmhurst joined forces in 1988 to establish a not-for-profit educational foundation that could provide funds outside the regular district budget. The District 205 Foundation for Educational Excellence was born out of a desire to offer teachers and students an opportunity to try new ideas that would enrich the education of the district's students.

"We wanted anyone in the district, but especially teachers, to have a source for funds," said Jan Dondlinger, current chairperson for the Foundation. "Our hope was to encourage creativity and teaching excellence and to not have them worry about where they would get the money to pay for their great ideas."

District 205 was one of the first in Illinois to establish a foundation. Since its inception, the Foundation has provided over \$300,000 to teachers, students, and volunteers at all of its twelve schools. Raising money through direct appeals, special events and unique fund raisers, the Foundation has become the life-blood for teachers in the district who want to provide their students with equipment or programs that add a special 'spark' to the regular curriculum.

## Fund raising methods

The Foundation's goals have gone through something of a roller coaster ride over eight years. When things were getting started, the expectations were grand, but initial direct mail appeals had disappointing results. As the years went by, Foundation directors learned that developing a variety of events and specialty items was critical, and that each must have a link to children and education and should elicit pride in our community.

For example, the York Community High School cross-country team has won 19 state championships, and our coach, Joe Newton, is one of the best known high school track and field coaches in the nation. Hence came the Joe Newton 5K Run for Education, held on Memorial Day each year. Corporate sponsors provide major funding and get their logo on our t-shirt. All in all, everybody wins: the community gets a great athletic event, the sponsors get a little free advertising, and the Foundation nets about \$8,000 annually.

Though not unique to our Foundation, the \$25,000 "Promise of Education" Scholarship Raffle puts a special spin on the traditional raffle idea. The prize is NOT cash, but a \$25,000 scholarship in the form of a trust, to be paid directly to a college or technical training school of the winners' or their beneficiaries' choice. The last two raffles netted the Foundation over \$20,000 in proceeds.

One of the Foundation's most successful specialty items, the "Landmarks Coverlet" is a cotton blanket or throw produced for us by a company in Pennsylvania. With over \$12,000 in net proceeds,



*The Joe Newton Run. Photo courtesy the District 205 Foundation.*

its success is attributable to the *custom design* woven into its top. Quite wisely, the Foundation's directors decided that in this instance it would put the emphasis not on schools, but on the community. They ruled out pictures of our twelve school buildings and instead depicted a dozen of Elmhurst's best-known landmarks. The coverlet therefore has had appeal to hundreds of purchasers in the community who have ties not only to our high school, but to our library, art museum, parks, veterans' memorial, and local historical museum. The coverlet has become a unique and very popular gift in Elmhurst!

## Established criteria in awards

Once the money is raised, deciding who it should be given to is an important issue for the Foundation's board of directors. Following a prescribed granting procedure, the board generally awards between twenty and fifty individual grants annually, ranging from a few hundred dollars to \$10,000. Creativity and innovation are valued and the equipment in the grant request must fit with and enhance the established curriculum. Generally speaking, the more students that benefit from the grant, the better, but the guidelines are such that grants have been awarded for anything from an individual student's photography essay to science equipment that benefited students district-wide. More than one hundred of District 205's outstanding educators have received Foundation grants over the years.

In addition to its individual grants program, the Foundation has selected several bigger, longer-term projects to support. In 1997, the Foundation's board voted to support the York High School Creativity and Broadcast Communications Centers with a \$30,000 grant, to be awarded over three years. In years past, the Foundation also supported the York Writing Center in a similar fashion and continues to support the district-wide, volunteer-staffed Publishing Center which turns student-written and illustrated manuscripts into bound books.

"The Creativity and Broadcast Communications Centers are the perfect projects for us," said Chuck Freiburger, Vice Chairperson of the Foundation. "The centralized location make the equipment available to any student in the school. Students studying in English, Business, Social Studies, and Broadcast Communications classes all use the center. They work together and learn from one another."

As educational funding becomes tighter, the number of educational foundations will continue to grow. They can help fill the financial void that our fast-past expansion of classroom technology has created. They can also help restore programs, like art and music, that we have so often seen cut. Elementary and secondary foundations are fast becoming an important part of the American public education mix.

*Val Stewart served as the Executive Director of the District 205 Foundation from 1993 to 1996. She is currently the Coordinator of Community Relations for Elmhurst Public Schools with liaison responsibilities to the Foundation.*



## Aircraft simulator...continued from page 1

dents not only to learn the material in a classroom environment, but to practice what they learn and be tested."

For this reason, the centerpiece of the facility is a fully operational mockup of a Boeing 747 passenger cabin. This cabin trainer and its video system help provide hands-on instruction in a way that few corporate training programs can come close to.

United uses this cabin trainer primarily for instruction in food preparation and presentation, passenger safety equipment demos and customer interaction. Two older simulators, now being upgraded with similar video systems, are also used in these curricular areas, with several more at nearby O'Hare Airport used for instruction in emergency procedures.

### A UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The new cabin trainer is unique for the airline in two ways. First, it is complete in every detail, offering trainees a fully operational galley, aircraft video and audio systems, and first class, business class and economy class sections. Second, its elaborate video system allows instructors to show demonstrations taking place on board to large groups in an adjoining classroom.

A typical session using the cabin trainer includes 10 to 30 students. It begins in the classroom with a short lecture, viewing of a videotape, and discussion. Then the class will move into the simulator. Most often the instructor will demonstrate the topic at hand, whether that's preparing a meal,

*The cabin trainer and its video system help provide hands-on instruction in a way that few corporate training programs can come close to.*



*The classroom and the outside of the cabin trainer. Note the instructor's station and the ceiling-mounted Sharp monitor.*

showing passengers the use of safety equipment or role playing customer interactions. Then the students practice the skills they've learned.

One problem that United has long faced is the limited space for student observers in an airline galley or aisle. To offer as realistic an experience as possible, United instructors have wanted to do the demonstrations and practice sessions in their cabin trainers, but have not, until now, been able to allow a whole class to watch them at once. They have also long understood the value of self- and class-critiques of practice sessions. Now they can pick up the various sessions with color cameras mounted in each of the cabin's zones and send them to a switcher, VCR and large-screen monitor at the instructor's station. Students can watch the sessions live from the classroom, and instructors can

play back the videos for student review or their own evaluation.

Evaluation is important in itself. United students must pass a series of tests before they are allowed to leave the program and start on the job. Center staff evaluate and videotape each student, one-on-one, in the cabin trainer, recording their ability to perform and to react professionally in a number of situations.

### THE INSTALLATION AND THE AUDIO/VISUAL SYSTEM

United Airlines has used cabin simulators for training for many years. The alternative, says Tulp, is to use real aircraft, which is very expensive, or to forgo hands-on training, "which was never an option." Real air-

# No excuses, no compromises



## Panasonic PT-L592 projector

- Very bright: 600 ANSI lumens!
- True 800 x 600 resolution—very clean 1024 x 768 via Panasonic's intelligent compression
- 3,000 hour lamp—up to 3 years with normal use
- Power zoom and focus
- Use portable or ceiling mount

**Save almost \$1,600 from United!**

List price \$6,995    United's price \$5,395

**Panasonic**  
Broadcast & Television Systems Company





craft, though once commonly used in training, became almost impossible to schedule in the '80s and '90s, as aircraft utilization increased dramatically.

The Center's staff began planning the construction of the 747 cabin trainer in 1995, because they saw an increased need for training new flight attendants for service on international flights, which use these large planes. They took the opportunity, at this time, to address a number of deficiencies in the trainers they were already using, including the need for the video system.

The challenges involved in building the a/v system included fitting it unobtrusively into the on-board environment, providing for the convenience of the instructors and students, and offering the flexibility to work in the various conditions that would be used to simulate a real aircraft at work.

One interesting detail of the video system is the use of a Sharp LCD projector in the first class section. A real airliner would include a three-tube projector specially built to withstand the G-forces and vibration encountered in flight. The cost of such projectors is very high, and the special construction is not needed for the cabin trainer. United found they were able to get very good pictures and interface to the airliner VCRs with the lower-cost Sharp, while staying close to the look and feel of the on-board projectors.

The image quality coming from the LCD projector allows instructors to use it in two ways. While the primary purpose is instruc-

tion on the operation of the on-board video system, it also proves convenient for classes working inside the simulator. "We can use it for demonstrations and to play videos for a class that might be sitting in the cabin trainer," says Tulp. "There's no need to move them back into the classroom."

The instructor's station, at the front of the classroom, has added a lot of flexibility to the system. A Kramer switcher and a triple monitor make it very easy to select the proper feed for the monitor or VCR. It also provides a handy place for gathering notes and instructional materials.

The cameras, too, have proved very flexible. "Rick at United Visual suggested we go with surveillance cameras," comments Tulp. "They gave us color and also a very clear picture under low light conditions. We needed something like that if we wanted to shoot, say, customer interaction during a night flight. The goal in all of this is to give us the flexibility to train in the different environments actually encountered on board the aircraft."

That flexibility is critical to the success of the training program. Tulp says the new cabin trainer "works wonderfully...The keys are its realism, its hands on component, and the ability it gives us to evaluate, review and coach our students. It really comes down to the ability to simulate the actual work environment and teach our cabin crews to perform in that environment.

## United Visual premieres a new web site

Debuting this month is United's web site at [www.unitedvisual.com](http://www.unitedvisual.com). The goal of the site is to provide up-to-the-minute information on rapidly-changing presentation products. Initially, we are offering articles about a/v users, technical tips, rental and sale pricing, plus a catalog of LCD and CRT projectors and panels.

## United beefs up staff

We've made several personnel changes at United Visual in response to rapid growth this year. Rick Nelson has taken on the role of Sales Manager and has turned over many of his accounts to Paul Solarz and a new hire, Brian Sheridan. Brian, formerly of Swiderski Electronics, has a number of years in a/v systems sales.

Jake Mejaski has moved from sales to our rental department, where he will work to develop new business, particularly in the hotel industry. Dale Bottcher, formerly of U.S. Robotics, will be responsible for Jake's sales accounts.

In service, John Lenox has taken over as Service Manager, while Bob Carlson has a new position as MIS Manager. We've added video technicians Art Funk, Dave Michel and Angel Pagan, and Dawn Culver will be helping with service administration. We've also added Santo DiBernardo as Field Installation Manager and Dan McGoldrick and Ron Beilfuss as installers.

We hope you'll have a chance to work with our new staff members soon.

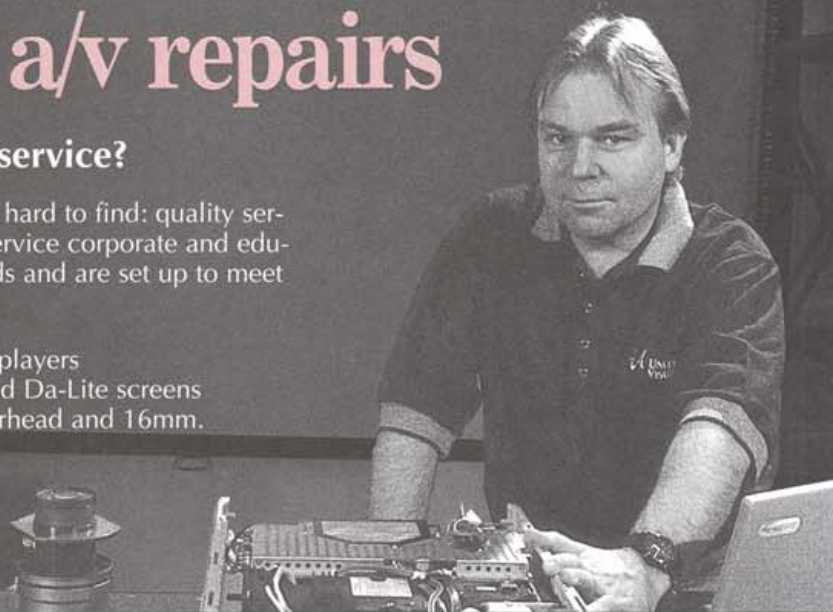
# We want your a/v repairs

## Are you looking for honest, reliable service?

We offer something that should be simple, but is so hard to find: quality service and fast turnaround at competitive rates. We service corporate and educational accounts only, so we understand your needs and are set up to meet them. We repair:

- LCD projectors and panels
- Sony 3-tube projectors
- Video recorders, monitors and cameras
- Laserdisc players
- Draper and Da-Lite screens
- Slide, overhead and 16mm. projectors

**Phone John Lenox at 888/ 814-0050**  
for details or to set up a service call.







Venetucci and the advanced class review works in progress. On page 1: advanced broadcast students Josh Hughey and Corinne Sybolski edit a segment of a news magazine

fundamentals of news gathering, script writing, equipment usage and media production. There's a healthy dose of background material, too, including First Amendment issues. Then he puts them to work on hands-on video projects, culminating in a two to three minute "TV news package," which is the edited, videotaped portion of a television news broadcast. To create their segments, students shoot with portable cameras, edit, and add studio introductions using chroma key effect, titles and voiceovers.

"It seems to work," says Venetucci, "because we're able to find out, early on, which of our students are serious. The kids who don't complete the paperwork part of the course don't get the ability to work in the hands-on groups. They can't touch the equipment until they've demonstrated academic responsibility and dedication."

Venetucci designed a second, advanced class for juniors and seniors interested in careers in media, whether that's television, print or radio. Here they spend the semester

producing a half-hour TV news magazine. Last school year, says Venetucci, two of these programs were aired on Media One's local access channel in Elmhurst.

## The Creativity Center

The broadcast classes use York's Creativity Center (a computer multimedia lab) and Broadcast Communication Center (which consists of two video studios and an editing room). According to Mike Torney, who is in charge of both facilities, the centers are also available to students throughout the school for a wide range of projects. Students in American History create family histories and past/present connections using still picture videos (similar to what Ken Burns did with *The Civil War*). They also interview older relatives for their impressions of this century. Sociology students do "Who Am I" still picture videos, business education classes produce TV commercials, and English, science and art students work on a variety of videos and graphics. Students can use the systems to create computer presentations with imported video and audio, bring video images into printed newspapers and reports, and dump computer text, graphics and animations to videotape.

York has been using video with students for more than 25 years, but Torney had to start

# Outrageously reliable

## Philips new ProLite 4600 LCD projector

- 6,000-hour UHP lamp: guaranteed to hold at 75% of original brightness, or better, over full life
- SVGA and XGA resolution
- Very high, 450 ANSI lumen brightness

Call United Visual  
for a free demonstration

# PHILIPS



Save \$2,400  
at United Visual

List \$8,500  
Now \$6,100



almost from scratch when he took over five years ago. Studio equipment had become outdated or nonfunctional. The multimedia lab was being used mainly to create posters and transparencies by hand. Torney wanted to take advantage of the emerging video capabilities of computers. "Much of the polish that may be seen on student productions," he says, "is made possible by computers with the ability to 'frame grab' and 'dump' to videotape. Students produce on video, but bring portions to the computer to make adjustments, titles, and credits. Then they dump back to video for mass showings."

One problem Torney faces is funding equipment purchases. The District 205 Foundation for Educational Excellence, a non-profit organization which provides monies to Elmhurst public schools, has been very generous to the centers. Torney says Kevin Cavanaugh of United Visual has also made a contribution. "Kevin's been great at finding us just the right equipment, as well as training us and

a postproduction suite with three editing systems. The multimedia lab features seven camcorder copy stands, six computer workstations, two tape to tape dubbing stations, and four audio dubbing booths. Torney has outfitted the computers with HyperStudio, Astound, Claris Slide Show, and Macro-Media Action, plus a few other programs. One computer system has a color scanner, and he has interfaced two more workstations to laserdisc players and the camcorder copy stands.

Torney cuts corners where he can but buys quality where it counts. He converted the smaller studio from a classroom and uses the room's standard florescent lighting. He mounted new portable cameras on older studio pedestals donated by Sears and painted a wall blue to take advantage of the mixer's chroma-key capability. He was able to put an old teleprompter to good use, mounting it on a camera pedestal with homemade hardware. On the other hand, he was careful to choose S-VHS recorders

dpi, so you don't need anything heavy duty."

"Our operation's not as sophisticated as some," Venetucci says. "We have all sorts of gremlins that creep in, for instance, when we're doing audio work—but it gives the kids an excellent hands-on experience. They're using the basic technology that they would encounter in an industrial, educational, or broadcast operation."

Sometimes the limitations are frustrating, especially if equipment goes down. "But I keep telling the kids," Venetucci says, "that it's the same thing the pros go through. They've got better equipment, but they still have deadlines and technology issues. They can't always get the biggest and the best bells, buzzers and whistles. You've got to make do with what you have and do the best job you can, in the available time that you have."

## Bringing out the best

Because the broadcast courses are part of York's journalism program, there's a strong emphasis on writing. Students go through numerous drafts on scripts, with Venetucci serving as teacher and consultant. "To keep them honest, I say, 'you can't produce these pieces until the scripting is acceptable.' And that forces them to work hard. They see that there's a reason they have to take good notes when we start talking about effective lead writing, for example. They're going to be doing that. It's not enough to regurgitate factual knowledge. They have to internalize the concepts and understand what's going on."

Despite the rigor, the broadcast journalism courses are quite popular at York. Last year about 70 students completed the basic class and 30 the advanced. The skills these students learn are impressive. "They're learning how to report, how to direct, how to edit videotapes," comments Venetucci. "They're learning how to budget and manage their time, and to work with other people cooperatively." Most importantly, they're learning to put out their best efforts, and they have the chance to see how much those efforts can accomplish. "Too often kids can get away with low level stuff," says Venetucci. "When they're required to demonstrate higher level thinking, to synthesize information and apply the terms and concepts they've learned, they sometimes struggle. But these courses require these kinds of skills. Once our students realize our expectations, they rise to the challenge. And they do a great job. They never cease to amaze me with what they can do both creatively and technically."

*"They're learning how to report, how to direct, how to edit videotapes," ... "They're learning how to budget and manage their time, and to work with other people cooperatively."*



Basic broadcast students in the studio control room

taking care of pieces that malfunction."

In a typical day about 200 students work on projects at the centers—and virtually every student at York uses its systems. "In most of the schools I've visited," says Torney, "the TV studio is for the TV kids only. But the Panasonic equipment that Kevin found us lets almost anyone come in and get their feet wet. There's not much they can do to it."

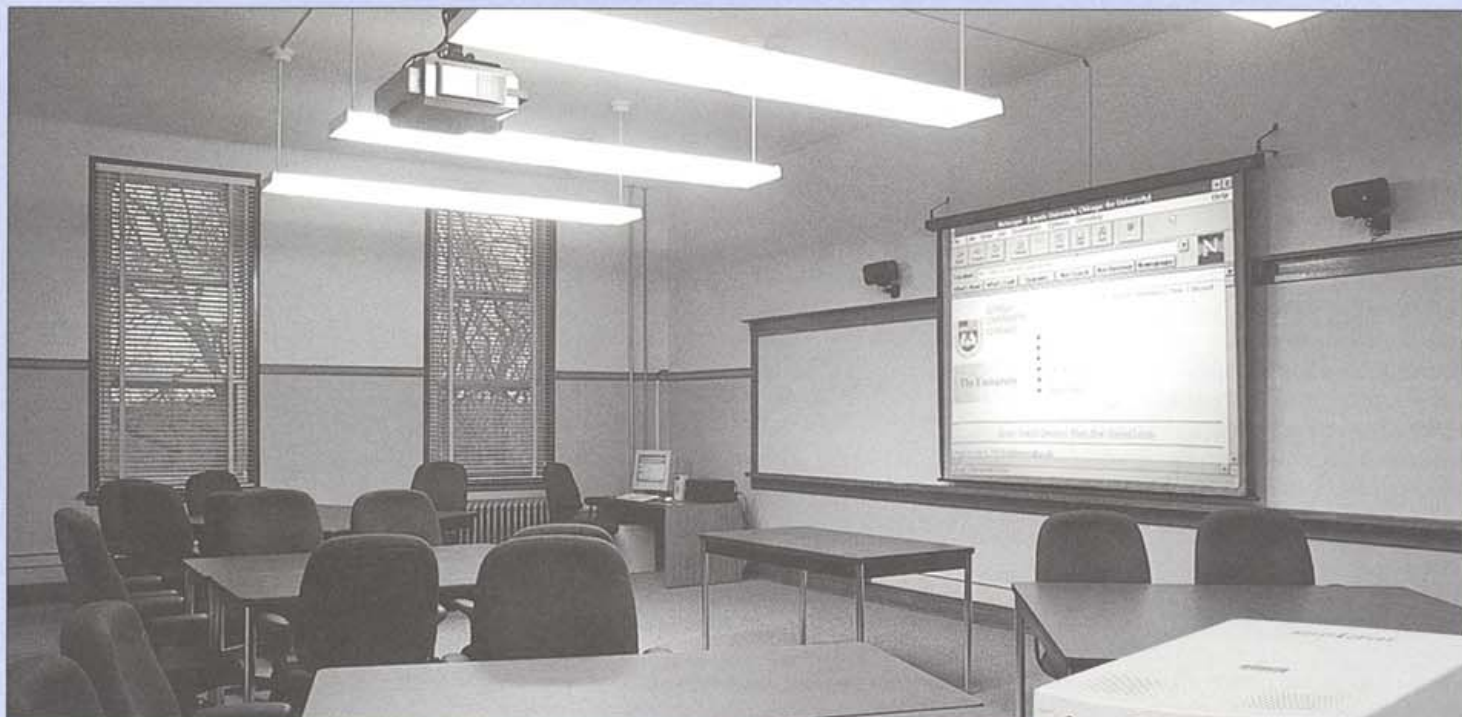
## Start small and build

The larger of York's two studios features a three-camera setup, plus a control room with a new Panasonic audio/video mixer and an ElectroVoice sound board. There's also a smaller studio with two cameras and

for the studios and editing suite, buys the fastest computer equipment he can afford, and was able to take advantage of a first-rate lighting grid installed years ago in the larger studio.

Torney has some useful advice for other educators who might want to start up similar programs. "Start small and build," he said. "There's a tendency with a lot of people to go with the latest technology rather than what would work. For example, I've visited other schools using those new digital still cameras, and a lot of them are very limited." Torney uses VHS camcorders for frame grabbing, liking their macro zoom lenses, ability to shoot motion video, and low cost. "In multimedia," he says, "you're going to end up on a monitor with only 72





## Uncompromising brightness

### At an uncompromising price

Now you can afford a complete, state-of-the-art a/v system for your conference room or classroom. Our low-cost package, based on Sharp's newest LCD projectors, includes:

- **Sharp LCD projector.** Your choice of our most popular high-brightness projectors, ceiling mounted in your facility. The XG-E1200U provides 832 x 624 resolution, the XG-E3000U 1024 x 768. Each offers 600 ANSI lumens and scan-doubled video.
- **Professional sound system** with 60-watt Toa amplifier and two wall-mounted JBL Control speakers.
- **Sharp XA-605 VHS-HQ video recorder.** Our best-selling VCR is a heavy-duty, commercial model with four heads, shuttle con-

trol dial, and a 180-channel tuner/timer.

- **Da-Lite manual wall screen, 120" diagonal.**
- **Custom wall plate** with computer, video, audio and mic inputs.
- **All installation, interfacing, cabling and mounting:** a complete, turn-key system.

*Please note that we will do everything possible to hold this price, but reserve the right to limit or amend it, depending on your location and certain specifics of your conference room. Running electrical and conduit, if necessary, will be an additional cost.*

Shown above: Sharp package at Loyola Graduate School of Business, Wilmette



**\$10,500**  
complete SVGA system, installed

**\$13,500**  
complete XGA system, installed

**SHARP®**  
Authorized dealer



1050 Spring Lake Drive,  
Itasca, IL 60143-2082  
Forwarding service requested

BULK RATE  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 6784  
Chicago, Illinois

### United Visual, Inc.

1050 Spring Lake Dr., Itasca, IL 60143-2082  
Phone 800/ 780-5313  
Fax 630/ 467-1616  
Web site [www.unitedvisual.com](http://www.unitedvisual.com)

### Please help us correct our database!

Any errors in the label at left? Is there someone else you know who'd like to receive *A United Vision*? Please fax this label or a note to 630/ 467-1616, or e-mail [dkreski@unitedvisual.com](mailto:dkreski@unitedvisual.com). Thanks!

© 1997 United Visual, Inc.