

Annual Report

Michael J. Faherty Broadcast Management Laboratory

1996-97

During its first year of operation, the Michael J. Faherty Broadcast Management Laboratory served as a cornerstone for the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication's on-going development of a nationally recognized program in broadcast and telecommunications management teaching, research and service. Cox Broadcasting's generous gift of a management laboratory in memory of Cox Broadcasting Vice President Michael J. Faherty attracted both attention and additional resources to the College's broadcast management program. This gift from Cox Broadcasting totaled \$150,000 and was made in three installments of \$50,000 each in May, June and August of 1996. We expended this money in the following categories -- \$50,000 for physical renovations; \$80,000 for equipment and software; \$20,000 for furnishings and incidental costs.

The Laboratory, dedicated on October 18, 1996, provides a state-of-the-art facility that allows broadcast management students to:

- consult industry data sources
- utilize computer-assisted management techniques
- work and learn in a more formal, corporate-style environment
- host professional presenters in a setting appropriate to their focus on management.

Approximately 500 students have directly benefited from the Faherty Lab during its first year of operation.

The goal of the facility is to introduce broadcast students to the current practices and techniques at the core of media management in the 1990s, while providing faculty with a focal point and support center for research into the strategic management of broadcast and telecommunications companies. Ultimately, the Faherty Laboratory serves the industry by preparing students to think critically and analytically about current and future management of broadcast

operations, and facilitating faculty and graduate research into issues and management techniques that will help the industry evolve during a period of rapid restructuring and change.

Key Events during 1996-97

Increases in Management Faculty in the Department of Telecommunications

The inaugural year of the Faherty Laboratory was marked by a number of key events and developments. First, in response to Cox Broadcasting's contribution of the facility, the central administration of the University of Georgia assigned the Department of Telecommunications an additional faculty position designated specifically for the Broadcast Management program. After a national search, the Department of Telecommunications offered the newly created position to Dr. C. Ann Hollifield, previously on the faculty at The Ohio State University. Dr. Hollifield's professional background includes both television and newspaper management. Her research focuses on the strategic management of media and telecommunications companies.

The management program was further strengthened last year when Dr. Dwight Brooks joined the faculty of the Department from Indiana University. Dr. Brooks also has a strong background in telecommunications management teaching and research, with a special emphasis on broadcast programming. Both Dr. Hollifield and Dr. Brooks began their appointments in September 1997. Their addition to the Department's faculty adds to the long-standing leadership of the management program of Peabody Awards Program Director Dr. Barry Sherman and Department of Telecommunications Chair, Dr. Alison Alexander. The increase in the number of faculty directly involved in the Faherty Laboratory concentrating their research and teaching on industry issues will raise the management program's profile both within the university and within the mass communication discipline nationally. With these increased faculty resources, the College also will be able to better serve a larger number of undergraduate and graduate students who want to focus their studies on broadcast management issues.

In addition to the growth in full-time permanent faculty in the management area, the Department of Telecommunications invited Dr. Augie Grant to spend Winter and Spring Quarters of 1997 as a Visiting Professor in the Telecommunications Management area. Dr. Grant, Director of the Mass Media Research Center at the University of South Carolina, returned to the University of Georgia to participate in two special conferences in Autumn 1997, and continues his association with the Faherty Laboratory.

Focus on Instruction in Management Concepts and Practice

The primary role of the Faherty Laboratory is to enhance instruction in broadcast management, preparing students to understand the evolving competitive environment facing the broadcast industry and to become broadcast managers themselves. The Faherty Laboratory supports management instruction in several different ways.

First and foremost, the Laboratory itself places students in a professional environment, forcing them out of the traditional classroom setting. The design of the Laboratory as a corporate boardroom helps students start viewing themselves as young professionals -- participants in, rather than observers of, the broadcast industry.

The state-of-the-art equipment in the Laboratory significantly enhances management instruction by allowing professors and presenters to connect students directly with the industry beyond the classroom's walls. Using the Laboratory's overhead projection system, computers and AV equipment, professors have been able to:

- pull up current ratings on Nielsen's Web pages to illustrate discussion of the relationship between ratings and management strategy
- visit radio and television station home pages to emphasize different marketing strategies
- bring relevant radio and television programs to students in real time
- use video-taped conferences with television network programming executives to highlight current thinking on programming strategies and network branding.

In addition to helping instructors augment traditional course materials in the classroom, the Faherty Laboratory has proved invaluable in helping prepare students for taking a management role themselves. Students in management classes are taught to use the presentational aides available in the Faherty Laboratory, and then are required to use those aids as they analyze broadcast management cases and present their findings to their peers in professional-quality presentations.

During its first year, the Faherty Laboratory has been used to teach the following courses:

- Introduction to Broadcast Management
- Graduate Seminar in Telecommunications Management
- Undergraduate Seminar in Programming and Telecommunications Analysis Techniques
- Undergraduate Seminar in Leadership and Management Development for Telecommunications

Management exercises that students have pursued in the last year using the Faherty Laboratory's resources have included:

- various media management case study exercises
- development of in-depth market and management analyses of specific radio and television stations and cable systems
- actual focus group research on specific television programs
- development of strategic programming plans
- analysis and valuation of specific media properties.

National Recognition for Cox Broadcasting and the Faherty Laboratory

The Faherty Laboratory has attracted significant attention among journalism and mass communication programs that are engaged in teaching broadcast and telecommunications management. In August 1997, Dr. Barry Sherman presented a model for media management instruction that included a discussion of how the Faherty Laboratory's facilities are being used at the University of Georgia to the Media Management and Economics Division of the Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC) annual international conference in Chicago, Illinois. In April 1998, Drs. Ann Hollifield and Augie Grant will jointly lead a discussion and demonstration at the Broadcast Education Association (BEA) national conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, about how multimedia technologies such as those available in the Laboratory can be used to enhance broadcast management instruction.

The Faherty Laboratory as a Center for Broadcast Management Research

During its first year, the Faherty Laboratory began demonstrating its value as a focal point and support center for faculty research into broadcast management strategies and issues. The addition of new faculty in the management area has helped create a critical mass of researchers interested in management issues.

Current broadcast and media management research projects include:

- A grant proposal by Drs. Barry Sherman, Ann Hollifield and Dwight Brooks to study the impact of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 on broadcast industry hiring and promotion practices.
- A study using data from the Jane Pauley Task Force Survey on Television News Hiring practices that examines the relationship between news media competition, product differentiation efforts and strategic hiring practices for newsroom personnel; Drs. Ann Hollifield and Lee Becker (University of Georgia), and Dr. Gerald Kosicki (The Ohio State University).
- Dr. Alison Alexander, Professor and chair of the Department of Telecommunications is revising her nationally recognized edited textbook on *Media Economics*; Dr. Alexander (University of Georgia), Dr. James Owens (Georgia State University), and Dr. Rod Carveth (University of Bridgeport).

- Dr. Sherman is currently writing the 3rd edition of his nationally recognized text *Telecommunications Management*, and its accompanying case book.
- A study examining the contractual relationship between television and Major League Baseball; Dr. Dwight Brooks.
- Research on the problems and possibilities involved in developing and launching a cable network; Dr. Dwight Brooks.
- A study examining the representations of African Americans in prime television programming; Dr. Dwight Brooks.
- An examination of strategic management approaches and challenges in the operation of transnational media companies, and a case study of the experiences of a German media company that entered the Eastern European market to be published in a textbook for undergraduate media management courses; Dr. Ann Hollifield.
- A chapter on the German media economy and the emerging telecommunications markets there in a book on the Global Media Economy; Dr. Ann Hollifield.
- A funded research project examining successful management strategies for rural telecommunications infrastructure development projects; Dr. Ann Hollifield, (University of Georgia), and Drs. Joseph Donnermeyer, Robert Agunga and Gwen Wolford (The Ohio State University).

In addition to these research projects now under way, the management faculty in the Department of Telecommunications previously have published numerous books, book chapters and articles on telecommunications management and programming.

Special Events

The Faherty Laboratory has also been used to host several special events that have brought students together with industry managers. One of the first people to meet with undergraduate and graduate broadcast management students in the Faherty Lab was **Bill Spell**,

Vice President for Sales/ Marketing for Cox Broadcasting. Later in the year they met with **Charles Giddens of Media Venture Partners** and **Sanders Hickey of Southern Broadcasting Corp.** to hear their views on the effects of the Telecommunications Reform Act on industry management issues. The lab also was the site of a meeting between Department and Peabody administrators and executives of the Georgia Public Radio and Television systems to discuss programming and marketing strategies for the use of the Peabody Radio and Television archives.

Future Plans for the Faherty Facility

The Faherty Laboratory will continue to be an integral part of broadcast management instruction and research in the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. Future plans being developed by the Telecommunications Management faculty include a series of informal roundtable luncheons between faculty and Georgia broadcasting and telecommunications executives. The purpose of the luncheons would be to continue to strengthen the ties between the management program and industry, keeping instruction and research in the management area up to date with the rapidly changing industry.

There also is discussion of eventually developing the informal luncheon program into a more formal annual or bi-annual broadcasting executive roundtable, where industry issues and needs may be more closely examined in ways that can continue to inform Telecommunications Management research and instruction in the College.

The Department also is engaging in strategic planning for the development and maintenance of the Michael J. Faherty Laboratory to ensure that it continues to be the state-of-the-art management facility it was intended to be. Current plans include:

- Installing and maintaining a telephone line in the Laboratory and purchasing audio teleconferencing equipment so that experts may be brought into the classroom to discuss broadcast management, even when they cannot travel to Athens;
- Acquiring key broadcast management reference books such as current editions of National Association of Broadcasters industry financial data, so that students can access the information they need to understand and role play industry decision-making processes;
- Acquire ratings analysis and programming software so that students can gain experience using them and learn to apply these skills to creative thinking about programming strategies;
- Acquire broadcast industry data sets on programming and trends so that students can gain experience conducting real-world industry data analyses;
- Develop the resources necessary to expand the qualitative research and data available for use in broadcast management courses and research projects.
- Protect and preserve the state-of-the-art nature of the Faherty Laboratory by ensuring continuous maintenance of the hardware and software that is available for management students to use in their explorations of the field.

The continuing support for the operation, maintenance and up-grading of this facility by Cox Broadcasting at the \$25,000 level will be used toward the above purposes.