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FINAL REPORT TO USAID
CONSORTIUM FOR LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
Cooperative Agreement No. LAC-0770-A-00-0034-00
Submitted by The Center for Democracy
February 26, 1996

I. Background

In 1990, The Center for Democracy was awarded a cooperative agreement for \$3,000,000. The Center submitted a successful proposal for the project in cooperation with the University at Albany, State University of New York and Florida International University. The Cooperative Agreement was amended 10 times, increasing its total funding to \$6,217,912.00. As had been foreseen, the cooperative agreement was a vehicle for bilateral buy-ins from USAID missions in the LAC region. Buy-ins were received from USAID/El Salvador, USAID/Panama, USAID/Nicaragua and USAID/Haiti. Separate grants from USAID/Costa Rica and USAID/Guatemala also resulted from Consortium activities. The core cooperative agreement expired on November 30, 1995.

II. Deliverables

The scope of work from the original core Consortium for Legislative Development project contained a list of illustrative deliverables. The required deliverables and the number of outputs provided under the Consortium project are listed in the table below.

Scope of Work	Anticipated Outputs	Actual Outputs
Formation of Consortium Committee	1	1
Designation of Program Managers and Central Coordinator	4	3 ¹

¹ Caleb McCarry served both as CFD program manager and Central Coordinator with support from the Consortium Committee and with USAID/LAC/DI concurrence.

Scope of Work	Anticipated Outputs	Actual Outputs
Establishment of Financial Management System, (subgrants and audit compliance)	Not defined	Accomplished
Needs Assessments	10	8 ²
Regional Seminars	7	6 ³
ATELCA Training Programs	6	8
Orientation Programs	3	2 ⁴
Graduate training	5	5
U.S. Internships	5	5
Procurement Plan	1	1
Develop Evaluation criteria	1	1

Numerous substantial benefits were delivered to the legislatures we worked with under this project. A partial list follows:

- For the first time in the history of Central America, sustained contacts were established between the region's national legislatures. ATELCA created links between professional staff that continue to function to this day. Also, the Consortium's efforts to encourage similar cooperation among the region's legislative leaders has led to the creation of the Forum of Legislative Presidents (FOPREL) which has a permanent and active secretariat in Managua.
- Links between European and Central American and Haitian parliamentarians and staff were encouraged. In the wake of the Cold War, the Consortium's efforts were instrumental to making these contacts. These experiences opened up channels of dialogue and understanding that continue to be vivid in the minds of key legislative leaders in the region. The relationships that were established under this project are a great under-utilized resource for the advancement of democracy and American interests.
- Training and orientation seminars upgraded the professional skills of legislators and staff in such areas as the separation of powers,

² 2 of the needs assessments were de-scoped under Amendment No. 9 to the cooperative agreement.

³ 1 regional seminar was de-scoped under Amendment No. 9.

⁴ 1 orientation activity was de-scoped under Amendment No. 9

budgetary matters, bill tracking, public policy analysis, and constituent relationships.

The needs assessments that were developed under the project led to the implementation of six bilateral projects. The bilateral projects proved to be substantively beneficial to the legislatures we worked with. The following is a partial overview of the Consortium project's bilateral accomplishments.

Guatemala:

- Professional linkages between the Congress and local NGO's such as Grupo Novadora were encouraged and reinforced.

Nicaragua:

- A modern electronic voting and sound system was instrumental in reinforcing the maintenance of a quorum and complete transparency in the most politically divisive legislature in the region.
- A sustainable microfilm-based document exchange program was established between the National Assembly and the Library of Congress. Concurrent commodity support and an intensive, six week training program at the Library of Congress reinforced this program component.
- A library of more than 500 legal and reference texts, including a set of encyclopedias, was carefully selected and procured.
- Diagnostic studies of the Assembly's role in the budgetary process and of the Assembly staff's training needs were completed.
- A state-of-the-art local area network computer system was designed collaboratively by the National Assembly, the Center and USAID. It was then procured and installed, along with substantial site preparation and infrastructure upgrades, in 1995. Concurrently, as a counter-part contribution and with UA/SUNY technical assistance, the National Assembly developed a manual bill tracking system and--for the first time--collected and catalogued all of Nicaragua's laws. This is an ongoing program aimed at creating a computerized statutory retrieval system.

The Center provided specialized software and training to the Assembly's technical staff which they are currently using to develop a computer application to automate the bill tracking system. This was the first time in our knowledge that a USAID-funded computer

procurement in a legislature had systematically sought to identify and manually develop information systems to be automated.

- Several reference publications were designed and printed collaboratively with the National Assembly.
- Two graduate students (one placed with UA/SUNY and the other with FIU) received Masters of Public Administration degrees and have been reintegrated into the Assembly's staff. The National Assembly created a budget analysis unit to utilize the skills of Mayling Obregón, one of the returning graduate students.

Panama:

- A state of the Art local area network computer system was designed by the Center and procured and installed by FIU.
- A key professional staffer, Estela Coyner, received graduate training at UA/SUNY.

El Salvador:

- In 1991, the Consortium, led by the Center, organized a critical orientation activity for the newly elected and returning members of the El Salvador Legislative Assembly which included --for the first time-- members of the Left from the Convergencia Nacional. The Seminar imparted important technical knowledge and also allowed the legislators a key opportunity to develop working relationships across ideological lines that greatly reinforced the peace process in El Salvador.

Haiti:

- FIU organized separate budget process seminars for the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in August 1991 at the moment of highest political tension for the Haitian Parliament.
- FIU prepared a preliminary MIS needs assessment.
- FIU sponsored Haitian participation in collaboration with the Center's effort to bring Central American legislators and staff to the Strasbourg Conference on Parliamentary Democracy.
- In 1994, the Center provided key logistical support, at USAID's request, to the "parliamentary initiative."

Costa Rica:

- UA/SUNY, FIU and the Center jointly drafted the Master Plan for the Modernization and Development of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica.
- The Center and CICAP/Universidad de Costa Rica and the Legislative Assembly created the Programa de Desarrollo Legislativo (PRODEL) which has developed a highly sophisticated bill drafting and public policy analysis program. Several key pieces of legislation including bills on AIDS and Solid Waste Management and a Code of Ethics for Public Servants have been enacted with near unanimous support in the legislature.
- 20 major manuals and publications have been produced, including the first legislative procedure manual ever developed for the Costa Rica Legislative Assembly.
- The Center and CICAP created the first Central American masters in public administration program for legislative staff.
- A comprehensive training program for Legislative Assembly staff was designed and implemented.
- A professional exchange program between the Costa Rica Legislative Assembly and the Texas State Senate and the LBJ School of Public Affairs of the University of Texas at Austin was established. This exchange program has led, for example, to the creation of a new media affairs office in the Legislative Assembly.
- The Center placed five professional staffers from the Legislative Assembly into U.S. congressional offices under a six-week "congressional fellows" program.
- The Center and FIU initiated and coordinated multi-donor support for the Legislative Assembly's Master Plan for Legislative Modernization and Development.
- Two graduate students completed studies at UA/SUNY.
- A state of the art computer-based imaging system was designed and installed to upgrade and automate the Legislative Assembly's

archives. In addition, the Center secured a donation of computers from Dell Computer corporation that upgraded the Assembly's library facilities and created a first ever electronic link between the Minister of the Presidency and the Legislative Assembly.

III. Overview of the Development of the Consortium

The Consortium for Legislative Development was a joint creation of The Center for Democracy and AID. Initially, the Center sought a sole-source grant to conduct legislature-strengthening activities in the Western Hemisphere. However, parts of USAID felt that the Center and its strong networking skills should be augmented by institutions with more technically-oriented experience.

Therefore, at USAID's suggestion, the Center, led by its president, Allen Weinstein, revised its proposal to include the participation of Dr. Abdo Baaklini of the University at Albany, State University of New York (UA/SUNY) and Dr. Mark Rosenberg of Florida International University (FIU). Dr. Baaklini is the head of the SUNY's Center for Legislative Development which pioneered USAID's legislature-strengthening programs in Brazil, Somalia and Korea in the 1970s. Dr. Rosenberg is a noted Latin Americanist and an expert in diagnostic studies. At the last minute, FIU's representative in the Consortium was changed from Dr. Rosenberg to Dr. Allan Rosenbaum, the dean of the School of Public Affairs.

Once the cooperative agreement was issued, the Consortium for Legislative Development was formed as an umbrella organization. It was set up under a consensual management model under the direction of a three-party Consortium Committee whose "principals" were Allen Weinstein, Abdo Baaklini and Allan Rosenbaum. A second tier of "program managers" was put in place to manage day-to-day implementation of program activities. Caleb McCarry served in this capacity for The Center for Democracy, Dr. Charles Dawson for UA//SUNY and Gerald Reed for FIU.

The Consortium's efforts immediately focused on needs assessments which quickly led to active discussions of bilateral projects. The Consortium had been conceived by USAID as a convenient source of technical advice and support for USAID missions in the legislature-strengthening area. Prior to project start up, the LAC/DI office had sent out cables advising the field of the existence of this technical assistance instrument and gauging the potential demand for bilateral buy-ins.

Once bilateral buy-ins began to kick-in, the Consortium started to shift its efforts and focus from diagnostic and regionally-based activities to implementation of bilateral projects. The last buy-in, for Nicaragua, ended in November 1995. The last separate bilateral project in Costa Rica will end in March 1996.

In 1993, in the wake of a comprehensive financial audit by Price Waterhouse, a management assessment by Management Systems International and a program evaluation by Creative Associates, FIU resigned from the Consortium and UA/SUNY's role was reduced to completing the graduate studies program. The Consortium continued its activities thereafter under The Center for Democracy's auspices. During this final phase of the project, the Center provided critical support at USAID's request to the Haitian parliament. The Center also completed a commodity-oriented support program for the Nicaragua National Assembly and, in Costa Rica, created USAID's premiere legislative development project.

IV. Lessons Learned

A. Structure of the Consortium

The Center brought political contacts, networking skills and legislature-strengthening experience to the Consortium. UA/SUNY and FIU both brought an academic perspective and, to differing degrees, legislature-strengthening experience to the Consortium. The Center's skills complimented both universities, however, the two universities' areas of expertise overlapped. This created confusion and led to tension within the Consortium.

The replacement of Dr. Rosenberg by Dr. Rosenbaum just before the Consortium was formed upset a balance that USAID had sought to build into the Consortium. As we only later understood, USAID's original intention was for the Center to provide political leadership and networking skills, for UA/SUNY to provide legislature-specific working methodologies and for FIU to provide skills in the development of scientific needs assessments. Nonetheless, this intention on USAID's part was never clearly communicated to and, therefore, was never fully understood by the Consortium's principals.

The balance USAID sought to instill in encouraging the creation of the Consortium was never established. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the presence of two academic institutions in the Consortium with competing skills was bound to cause friction.

Recommendations:

- In the future, when seeking to combine different institutions with similar skills, it would be important to clearly define each institution's area of expertise and responsibility in advance. These areas of expertise should be clearly spelled-out (e.g. information technology, legislative committee development, budgeting, networking and political skills). It is essential that there be a clear understanding among the decision-makers involved as to what these areas of expertise and responsibility are.

B. Management of the Consortium

The Consortium Committee was a tripartite arrangement. Professor Weinstein chaired the Committee and Drs. Baaklini and Rosenbaum served as their institutions' principals on the Committee. By mutual agreement of the parties, the Consortium Committee functioned as a collegial body that took its decisions by consensus. In the event of a dispute, it was agreed that the Center could force a vote with the support of one of the universities. With the exception of this agreement, it was agreed that all three institutions would serve as equal partners within the Consortium. USAID officials charged with overseeing the project regularly participated in the Consortium Committee meetings.

The division of labor among the Consortium's partner institutions was not clearly defined. The scopes of work developed for subgrants were general in nature and not consulted except in moments of conflict. The Consortium divided obligated funds through an agreed-upon arrangement whereby the two universities received an equal share of funds while the Center received a slightly larger share in recognition of its greater responsibilities as prime grantee with USAID.

Following the addition of Patricia Palmer (a veteran USAID contracting specialist) to the Center's staff, the Center altered the "divide the pie first" arrangement. The lack of clearly defined areas of responsibility had led to confusion within the Consortium. It also meant that in practice the Center was absorbing the majority of the costs and workload generated under the project. On Ms. Palmer's advice, the Center required that budgets for

buy-ins to the core cooperative agreement correlate to specific scopes of work with clearly defined deliverable work products. Nonetheless, within this new management approach, the Center still sought to maintain as close to a three-way split of available funds as possible.

During the triple evaluation process that the Consortium went through, and in particular in response to the management assessment, the Center changed its approach to the management of the cooperative agreement. With USAID concurrence, the consensual approach agreed to by the Consortium Committee was replaced by an approach under which the Center sought to enforce its subagreements with each university in a more typical grantee-subgrantee relationship. UA/SUNY cooperated with this change of management while FIU resisted it.

From a programmatic perspective, the Consortium Committee was not of one mind as regarded a division of efforts. UA/SUNY sought to divide areas of responsibility under the grant on a geographical basis. It was initially agreed in the Consortium Committee (with reservations expressed by the Center and FIU) that UA/SUNY would, in general, work in South America, the Center in Central America and FIU in the Caribbean. In effect, under this regime, each institution would independently implement the work authorized under the scope of work (i.e. needs assessments, etc.) in their area of geographic responsibility. This policy was partially adhered to. For example, UA/SUNY conducted independent needs assessments in Bolivia and Paraguay, and FIU worked independently in Haiti.

FIU in particular was of the mind that all three institutions should participate equally in all activities ostensibly to bring the Consortium's collective expertise to bear. In keeping with its position, FIU invited the other institutions to participate in its early Haiti activities, but since the USAID mission requested that only one Consortium institution be deployed, this offer was declined by the Center and UA/SUNY. UA/SUNY resisted FIU's efforts to participate in its activities in South America. On the occasion of a computer-oriented technical assistance mission to Paraguay, UA/SUNY only reluctantly agreed to FIU collaboration. The Center did not seek to participate in UA/SUNY's work in South America or to work in the Caribbean, which had been defined as FIU's area of responsibility.

On the other hand, both FIU and SUNY actively sought to work in Central America. Both institutions insisted on accompanying The Center for Democracy on needs assessments missions and in participating in ATELCA activities. FIU also participated in the Center's activities with the Council of

Europe. For its part, the Center sought to accommodate these requests and in exchange asked for and received counterpart support from FIU and UA/SUNY's program managers, Mr. Reed and Dr. Dawson. These joint activities led to a relatively good and collegial working relationship among the project's program managers.

The fact that five of the six bilateral projects developed under the Consortium project came from Central America is sufficient to understand why the geographical approach was only partially adhered to, particularly in the case of UA/SUNY.

The Consortium never effectively resolved whether its approach should be geographically based or "all for one, one for all" across geographical lines. Individuals in USAID inadvertently exacerbated this problem by seeking to use only single institutions (such as in Haiti) or to exclude others (such as in Guatemala where the mission chose to work with UA/SUNY instead of the Center, or in Panama where the mission sought to exclude UA/SUNY's program manager). USAID missions in Central America also objected to the redundant expense and apparent duplication of effort involved in having three sets of Consortium partners participating in program activities. In the end, the Center's efforts to accommodate FIU and UA/SUNY's conflicting interests in this area only led to greater confusion and tension within the Consortium.

Recommendations:

- The division of responsibilities among Consortium partners should be based on the areas of expertise defined for each institution. Also, each Consortium institution's budgets should be tied to specific scopes of work.
- The management of a Consortium should be conducted on the grantee-subgrantee model with every effort made by the prime grantee to secure consensual decisions with its partners.
- Geographical divisions of effort are not valid unless substantiated by cultural, linguistic and technical expertise.
- In a regionally-based and demand-driven project such as this one, selection of which partner institution should address which request should be based on previously identified and agreed-to areas of expertise.

- Deployment of multiple institutions should be done (and accepted by USAID) where it is warranted (for example, in a needs assessment which is likely to require a broad range of skills ranging from technical to political).

C. USAID's Management Role & the Evaluation Process

The Center for Democracy and its Consortium partners encountered many instances where we received good professional support and collaboration from USAID. At the working level, the Consortium's channel of communication with LAC/DI was always open and positive. When the relationship worked best, there was a strong element of trust involved and a shared interest and commitment to providing assistance to the legislatures in the countries involved.

Individual missions were cooperative with the Consortium. USAID/Nicaragua worked very closely with the Consortium in a very difficult and politically-explosive environment. USAID/Costa Rica was steadfast in its support of the Consortium and its efforts. USAID/El Salvador was extremely cooperative in developing and supporting the orientation activity we undertook in that country. USAID/Panama actively sought to involve and work collaboratively with the Consortium.

However, during the course of the design and implementation of this project, the Center encountered problems within USAID that hampered program performance. The following section details some of these problems for the purpose of allowing USAID to consider our point of view when designing similar projects in the future. These observations are not intended to be exclusive of the positive aspects of our collaboration with USAID.

Because this was a Washington-funded regional project, the Consortium immediately encountered turbulence not of its own making but inherent to the tensions between AID's Washington operations and its field missions. Missions tended to be uninterested and sometimes even hostile to regional activities (such as ATELCA and the Strasbourg Conference on Parliamentary Democracy). In the face of complaints from the field, senior management in the LAC/DI office was not consistently supportive of regional activities. Missions tended to want to use the Consortium's services for bilateral activities only. In addition, missions invariably complained that they were not "in the loop" when activities were coordinated through Washington and almost simultaneously resented having to coordinate any bilateral activities with Washington.

Due to the rotating nature of USAID assignments, the Consortium encountered multiple changes of management both in Washington and in the field. Each change of management generated new expectations, new demands, and new and varying levels of enforcement of bureaucratic regulations. It appeared that little institutional memory was transmitted to new program officers. In many cases, reams of documentation amassed in the files under one project officer seem to have gone virtually unread by his or her successor.

Because USAID was the evaluators' client, USAID's role in the formation and development of the Consortium was not addressed in either the management assessment or the program evaluation of the project. In our view, the resulting reports were incomplete and of limited use because they did not look into USAID's "substantial involvement" under this cooperative agreement in the Consortium's successes and shortcomings. We believe that assessments and evaluations of this project were employed primarily to respond to self-amplifying negative feedback from within USAID in order to deflect criticism away from USAID management and onto the Consortium.

As noted previously, the Center's Costa Rica project has developed one of the most sophisticated technical support efforts ever devised with international financing for a developing legislature. This project is widely viewed as extraordinarily successful.

Reinforcing our view of USAID's off-center use of evaluations, it seems to us that if our Costa Rica project were to be evaluated, the terms of reference would no doubt be couched so as to reflect credit on USAID. However, since USAID/Costa Rica is ending its operations in the country, it appears that there is no institutional need on USAID's part to evaluate this project in spite of the potential benefit of such an evaluation to legislative development efforts elsewhere.

Recommendations:

- When evaluating cooperative agreements, which are joint ventures, USAID should include a review of its own role in the development of programs and in their management. USAID should utilize the evaluation process to derive lessons learned, identify best practices, and to measure impact. Transparency and clarity of purpose are of paramount importance. For the evaluation process to be helpful, it must be implemented in an atmosphere of trust. The process must not be punitive, but rather useful for programmatic improvement.

- USAID should make a more concerted effort to coordinate between incoming and outgoing program managers. Files and project progress should be reviewed between outgoing and incoming USAID managers and preferably also between these officers and the grantee. This would reduce the incidence of ad hoc redirections of program efforts and cut down on the amount of time needed to get grantees and their program officers "up-to-speed" with one another.
- USAID should take a more proactive role in defining how communications should be routed when Washington and field missions are involved. Invariably, failure to do so reflects badly on the grantee and has a negative impact on program performance.

The Center For Democracy Regional Program - Overview

Quarterly Report August 1 - October 31, 1990

August 1, 1990 - July 31, 1991. Illustrative Workplan and time frame.
Submitted for review.

September 29 - October 4, 1990. ATELCA participation in the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (ASLCS) annual meeting. - Charlestown, West Virginia.

October 21-27, 1990. Nicaragua Needs Assessment.

November 1-3, 1990. Third meeting of the General Assembly of ATELCA in San Salvador, El Salvador.

November 28, 1990. Second Consortium Committee Meeting: discussion of new draft work plan.

December 11-14, 1990. Panama Needs Assessment, interrupted by riot, to be rescheduled at later date.

December 16, 1990. Second draft of Nicaragua Needs Assessment submitted to USAID.

December 18-21, 1990. FIU fielded team for an exploratory visit to Haiti for possible bilateral legislative assistance project.

January 8-10, 1991. Meetings with Costa Rican leadership to reach an agreement with USAID for the implementation of legislative development effort.

January 17-26, 1991. Costa Rica Needs Assessment, immediately followed by a trip to Washington, by President of the Assembly, Juan Jose Trejos Fonseca, Deputy Ovidio Pacheco Salazar, Deputy Jose Joaquin Chavez and Executive Director, Olmedo Castro Rojas.

Quarterly Report November 1 - January 31, 1991

PANAMA

February 19-23, 1991. Submission of needs assessment for Panama. Recommendations; technical information systems design and development, commodities assistance and training initiatives for Assembly members and their staff.

March 25-26, 1991. CFD/FIU team returned to review draft with the Panama Legislative Assembly to present the final version to the Assembly and the USAID Mission. Consortium was asked to provide the USAID Mission with a project plan to establish general technical assistance, training and commodities priorities.

COSTA RICA

February 27 - March 1, 1991. CFD travel to San Jose to review draft needs assessment document with the Legislative Assembly.

March 19-21, 1991. CFD, FIU, CLD worked with ad-hoc committee for the Modernization of the Legislative Assembly which set out several key areas for developing assistance: Creation of a permanent committee to replace ad-hoc, internal fund for constructing office space, procurement of equipment, and training. Consortium also agreed to expand document into a more structured plan.

April 2-13, 1991. Consortium team worked on Master Plan, delivered to Legislative assembly on April 16, 1991.

April 25, 1991. President Trejos Fonseca and key political leaders of Costa Rica present plan to donor community, signaling multi-partisan support for the document.

HAITI

March trip by FIU, agreed to prepare background documents on Consortium in French and a project plan to USAID for both chambers of the Haitian Parliament.

ATELCA

March 21-24, 1991. Oversight, Legislative Techniques and Technology Committee and the by-law Review Committee of ATELCA met in Panama City.

April 4-7, 1991. ATELCA committee meeting at the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador.

April 10-14, 1991. Executive Committee meeting in Washington, D.C. Purpose of visit was for the chief clerks of the member countries to participate in a schedule of meetings prepared by J. Walter Stewart, Secretary of the US Senate.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The Center for Democracy prepared a draft commodity procurement plan, reviewed by UA/FIU and forwarded by the LAC/DI to a procurement specialist.

STATUS OF BUY INS

Panama - prepare needs assessment for \$700,000 USAID/Panama funded legislative development project.

Costa Rica - USAID/Costa Rica mission director states that the mission will amend its PATS project to create a \$3 million legislative development project.

Haiti - Mission asked FIU to prepare a project plan for a buy-in of unspecified proportions.

Nicaragua - no further developments.

Guatemala - USAID/Guatemala requested Dr. Abdo Baaklini to discuss mission's follow-on legislative development activities.

QUARTERLY REPORT MAY 1 - JULY 31, 1991

COSTA RICA

Consortium provides USAID/Costa Rica with clarifications request of April 30, 1991.

FIU provides expertise of Dr. Harvey Averch and Charles Frankenhoff to draft multi-donor framework proposal designed to assist the legislature in coordinating multi-lateral participation in the development and modernization of the legislature.

HAITI

FIU travel to Haiti to continue discussions with USAID and Parliament. Gerald Reed, Ana Carazo and Larry Harrington participate.

PANAMA

June 24-27, 1991 Consortium team of Caleb McCarry (CFD) and Gerald Reed (FIU), to Panama in response to request for clarifications on proposal which was re-written and submitted to AID in June and approval was given shortly thereafter.

GUATEMALA

June 13- 16, 1991. Manuel Lorenzo of FIU, interim evaluation of the MIS designed and installed in the Guatemalan Congress under previous AID funded cooperative agreement to the CFD.

EL SALVADOR

June 20-22, 1991. Orientation conference for newly elected legislators with training in fundamental legislative processes, role of Assembly in El Salvador and to introduce them to USAID development efforts in El Salvador.

HAITI

Follow up project proposal submitted to USAID/Haiti in May, evaluations and recommendations for commodity procurement for the National Assembly are made by a team from FIU, including review for MIS potential.

PARAGUAY

May 12-15, 1991. Action plan submitted for the National Assembly of Paraguay by UA to AID/W in June.

CONSORTIUM

Trip to Europe with bipartisan delegation from Costa Rican Legislative Assembly to discuss the Master Plan.

ATELCA

May 23-27, 1991. Honduras, fourth general Assembly Meeting of ATELCA. How a bill becomes a law, demonstration of Guatemalan MIS system, and publication of *Manual de Procedimientos Legislativos*.

June 14, 1991. Guatemala City, Executive Committee meeting, Caleb McCarry, CFD, and Manuel Lorenzo, FIU.

BUY-IN STATUS

Panama - project proposal submissions, revisions and clarifications, final report submitted in July.

Costa Rica - FIU submits multi-donor funding proposal.

Haiti - FIU continues work with Parliament and USAID to develop acceptable proposal.

Nicaragua - No further developments.

Guatemala - U/A preparing to submit Program for Immediate Action to USAID/Guatemala.

El Salvador - Amendment No. 1 received and signed June 19, 1992 for \$41, 244 to provide orientation seminar.

QUARTERLY REPORT AUGUST 1 - OCTOBER 1991

August 10-14, 1991. FIU hosts delegation of Haitian legislators to annual meeting of NCSL, Orlando, Florida. UA attends hosting delegation of Brazil's ANDAL organization.

HAITI

August 30-31, 1991. Haiti seminar of role of legislatures in the budgetary process.

Preliminary MIS study for the Haitian Parliament was conducted by Manuel Lorenzo of FIU, resulted on equipment and commodities being loaned by USAID/Haiti to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, with recommendations for future actions and commodity procurement.

August 30, 1991. Formal notification received executing Modification No. 3 which allocated \$314,904.00, implementation of activities has been suspended indefinitely by USAID due to the coup d'etat.

BRAZIL

September 1991 - UA Beatriz Lacerda, Deputy Chief to Senator Fernando Henrique Cardoso, began graduate studies in September.

GUATEMALA

September 26, 1991, consortium received notification of Cooperative Agreement #520-0398-A-00-1312-00 for \$152,000 to implement program submitted on August 8, 1991.

COSTA RICA

FIU technical assistance to Legislative Assembly.

September 16-18, 1991. CFD and FIU hosted a high-level delegation of Parliamentarians from Central America and Haiti to the third Strasbourg conference on parliamentary democracy.

PANAMA

As a result of the Modification no. 4 to the Cooperative Agreement on September 16, 1991 adds \$700,000 for Panama bilateral activities on October 21-24, 1991. Consortium team of UA and CFD to negotiate a memorandum of understanding governing the buy-in agreement with the Panamanian Legislative Assembly. MOU was signed.

COSTA RICA

October 24-25, 1991. CFD to discuss initiatives with USAID Costa Rica and to refine multi-donor process with the President of Legislative Assembly.

OTHER

October 26-27, 1991. Fourth meeting of the Presidents of Central American Congresses and Legislative Assemblies in San Salvador, El Salvador.

ATELCA

August 21-28, 1991. U/A hosts delegations from each Central American country, Bolivia, Paraguay and observers from Chile and Brazil for a budget seminar.

CONSORTIUM ACTIVITIES

October 9, 1991. Special meeting of the Consortium Committee to decide division of work in Panama and Guatemala, how to proceed in Haiti and Costa Rican initiatives.

October 29-30, 1991. Quarterly Consortium Meeting held in Albany.

QUARTERLY REPORT NOVEMBER 1 - JANUARY 31, 1992

November 12-14, 1991. Regional seminar held in Costa Rica on public policy entitled *Reorganization of the World Economy: Central American and United States Perspectives*.

NICARAGUA

U/A Technical assistance to the National Assembly of Nicaragua.

ATELCA

November 22-24, 1991. Fifth General Assembly of ATELCA in Managua, Nicaragua.

PARAGUAY

December 14-18, 1991. Technical assistance provided by FIU, U/A to Paraguay.

REGIONAL

January 1992. U/A graduate student from Costa Rica begins study under the regional project. Ana Fiorella Caravajal.

January 17, 1992. South America and Caribbean Strategy Meeting with AID and State Department Officials.

PANAMA

January 1 - February 2, 1992. Consortium team to Panama to conduct an assessment of the Legislative Assembly's needs regarding a computed legislative information system.

Amendment No. 5 to the Regional Cooperative Agreement was signed January 30, 1992 for bi-lateral activities in Nicaragua.

QUARTERLY REPORT FEBRUARY 1 -APRIL 1992.

February 5, 1992. Contact meeting of the Strasbourg Conference on Parliamentary Democracy.

GUATEMALA

March 2-3, 1992. Guatemala colloquy on Parliamentary Democracy, organized by ATELCA and attended by the Presidents of the legislatures from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Norway and Panama.

COSTA RICA

March 26-27, 1992. The New Role/ Donors Conference in Costa Rica.

April 21-22, 1992. Social Welfare Conference. FIU.

PANAMA

January 28 - February 8, 1992. Legislative information system site visit.

NICARAGUA

February 27, 1992. ANN President Alfredo Cesar meets with Consortium.

March 30, 1993. MOU signed between ANN and Consortium in Nicaragua.

April 22 - May 2, 1992. Technical Assistance provided to the ANN in Albany, Dr. Myriam Jarquin de Medina.

OTHER

April 2-3, 1992. Consortium represented at the Fifth Meeting of the Presidents of Central American Congresses and Legislative Assemblies.

April 30, 1992. Evaluation Criteria decision conference held in Washington, DC.

CONSORTIUM

February 25-26, 1992. Consortium quarterly meeting in Miami, Florida.

QUARTERLY REPORT MAY 1 - JULY 31, 1992

May 7, 1992. Consortium attends Strasbourg conference on Parliamentary Democracy Steering Committee meeting.

May 11-16, 1992. USAID/Dominican Republic, FIU University initiated a technical assistance effort to assist the Congress of the Dominican Republic.

May 22-24, 1992. Sixth general assembly of ATELCA held in Panama City. Topics included: The Role of a Parliament in a Democratic System; Evolution of the Parliaments: Challenge and Crisis; the Deliberation Crisis; Vision of the Legislators on the Modernization of Parliaments; Civil Service: examples from Brazil and Costa Rica; and development of the computer systems in the US.

June 18-19, 1992. CFD met with USAID/Panama mission to discuss the LIS report.

Technical assistance provided to the Nicaraguan National Assembly on their voting and sound system.

Costa Rican graduate student provided special instruction at the University of Albany. Dr. James Kent of U/A provided a special course for Ana Fiorella Carvajal on legislative oversight.

July 23-24, 1992. U/A conducted special legislative development orientation seminar in Albany for a delegation consisting of representatives from ANDAL, The UPI and federal and state legislative representatives and staff.

July 19, 1992. Two week intensive study tour sponsored by CFD of the state legislatures of Florida and New York, as well as the US Congress for Nicaraguan and Panamanian legislators and staff.

May 18, 1992. The Center submitted a year three workplan for the Consortium. The Workplan was discussed with AID and revised accordingly.

May 13, 1992. CFD, McCarry and Williams met with Sharon Isralow to discuss the preparation of the third year budgets for the regional projects. Concerns: remaining outputs of scope of work are not in demand; FIU and U/A under spent their budgets, CFD projects that by third year the Universities would exhaust their budgets; scope of work needs to be revised to allow for the continuation of core, regional activities demanded and to remove activities for which there is no apparent demand.

NICARAGUA COUNTRY REPORT.

BUY IN

As USAID considered how best to promote democracy in Nicaragua, it became clear that the National Assembly needed to be properly informed and institutionally capable of tackling, jointly with the executive branch, the complex issues facing the country. For these reasons the ANN was delivered as one of USAID/N's "effective government" activities under the multi-faceted Strengthening Democratic institutions project. Consortiums role was to help the Assembly build its institutional capacity to perform effectively its constitutionally assigned functions and enhance its role as a principal branch of government in a democratic society.

The Consortium targeted several specific tasks: institutional set-up for the development and modernization of the National Assembly; the development of staff resources through, in part, a graduate study program and training seminars, improving institutional linkages, research and external advisory support, creation of a statutory retrieval systems, bill status and reference capability systems, legislative publications, reference manuals and the timely production of the Diario de Debates and various commodities support.

Needs Assessment: December 1990 submission to AID Needs Assessment & Initial Bilateral Assistance Recommendations to the National Assembly of the Republic of Nicaragua. Ground assessment took place from October 21-27, 1990.

Program Proposal: Needs identified.

1. National Assembly Law Library.
2. Technical Assistance to the National Assembly.
3. Training
4. Legislative Office Equipment Commodities Assistance.

Memorandum of Understanding: Signed on March 31, 1991. Composed of three fundamental principles:

- a. Technical support and training for legislators and staff designed to reinforce the professional capabilities of the Assembly.
- b. Legislators and professional staff participation in international and regional conferences to reinforce professional and institutional links
- c. The development and implementation of an information system.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Program for Immediate Action: November 1- October 31, 1992. Program was funded through an initial obligation of \$550,000.
2. Voting and sound reinforcement system. June 1992, sole source award to Daktronics for the electronic Voting and Sound System in the ANN. Contract signed on September 24, 1992. Final installation of December 31, 1992.
3. Study tour of US legislatures --FIU/CFD/SUNY.
4. ATELCA V General Assembly. Partially funded by bilateral money.
5. Design of Management Information System-Myriam Medina Consultancy.
6. Presidential vs. Parliamentary Conference.
7. Graduate Degree program- two students, Daniel Centeno - SUNY Albany and Mayling Obregon - FIU.

Semi-Annual Report July 1 - December 1992

July 19 - 25, 1992, Study tour of US Legislatures, five members of the Nicaraguan National Assembly and four legislators and two staff members from Legislative Assembly of Panama participated and were joined in Albany by twelve legislators and staff from the Brazilian Federal Congress and State Legislatures. Nicaraguan delegation visited FIU North Miami and Tamiami Campuses and state capitals in Tallahassee and Albany.

October 5 - 9, 1992. Seminar for the Budget Committee of the National Assembly. Consortium prepared a legislative budgeting and oversight program in Washington to provide training in development of a national budget. Postponed due to controversial partial Junta Directiva election which prompted a Supreme Court sanction against the Assembly.

November 16 - 20, 1992. Technical Assistance provided to the National Assembly. Team was fielded to investigate, research and develop technical terms of reference to be used in a competitive bidding process to procure computer hardware, software integration assistance and training for the National Assembly. Provided preliminary technical recommendations, prior to departure from Nicaragua. Two weeks later a full description of the systems' functionality and components was delivered to the Center, which was revised and forwarded in English and in Spanish translation to USAID on January 28, 1993.

December 2 - 4, 1992. Parliamentary and Presidential Systems of Government U/A coordinated and implemented conference, topics included Parties & Policy Making; Political Imperatives, Executive-Legislative Relations and Controlling the Bureaucracy.

Installation of the Electronic Voting and Sound System. June 1992 Sole Source awarded to Daktronics, team was fielded to Nicaragua from June 24 -26, 1992 for information on design, technical/cost analysis and review of qualifications of local vendors. Technical and cost proposal was submitted to the Center on July 13, 1992. The Center and Daktronics signed a contract for this system on September 24, 1992. The final installation date for the system was December 31, 1992.

Graduate Students begin studies, Licdo. Daniel Centeno and Licda. Mayling Obregon.

February 3, 1993. Caleb McCarry, The Center for Democracy received call from USAID/Nicaragua Director, Janet Ballantyne, requesting that the Consortium postpone the initiation of new program activities until further notice due to the continuing political crisis at the National Assembly. She also indicated that until further notice, she would be coordinating the previously initiated programs with the Consortium.

Semi-Annual Report October 1, 1993 through March 31, 1994.

Activities continued under substantial suspension during October 1993 - January 1994. In January 1994 The Center for Democracy received authorization from USAID/Nicaragua to fully resume program activities under consultation with USAID/Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan National Assembly.

March 6 - 11, 1994. Caleb McCarry to Nicaragua to reactivate legislative development project funded under the Nicaragua buy-in. He accomplished the following tasks:

1. Sign an extension of the MOU between the consortium and the National Assembly. *MOU was signed, extending the agreement through March 7, 1996.*
2. Secure a commitment to reestablish multipartisan Legislative Development Committee through which to define new project activities and secure consensual authorizations on behalf of the host institution. *LCD was reinstated, committee would include the following leaders: Luis Humberto Guzman, Reynaldo Tefel, Myriam Arguello, Gustavo Tablada and Luis Sanchez Sancho.*
3. Review the status of project activities under way and those which were previously prepared but had been suspended during the past year. *Bill tracking and statutory retrieval projects being developed are substantially advanced and have received unconditional support from the renewed leadership from the parliament, strong agreement that the electronic voting board must be put into full effect, graduate students have support of all five factions, strong interest in proceeding with computer procurement to automate the information systems being developed under project.*
4. Explore additional and new project activities consistent with our existing scope of work and the current state of events in the National Assembly. *Leaders are in general agreement that the project should seek ways to reinforce the consensus that is fueling the positive surge in legislative activity.*
5. Preliminary exploration of coordination of multilateral assistance to the National Assembly. *During his visit Mr. McCarry met with the World Bank, not interested in "political involvement" and the Inter-American Development Bank.*

Short - term workshop in the US and in one Latin American Legislature.

Graduate Study Program. Mayling Obregon is scheduled to finish her Masters Degree in September 1994. Daniel Centeno is expected to complete his graduate studies in January 1995.

Short term training programs:

- 1) Legislative Budgeting and Program Oversight - two staffers would be sent to a state legislature to work with its budget committee.
- 2) Public Policy Analysis - two Nicaraguan staffers would spend three months working alongside Chilean counterparts at the Corporacion 2000 and the Instituto de Libertad y Desarrollo.

3) Training and Internship Program in Costa Rica. Third option not presented to the ANN, would be to send two or three candidates to participate in CICAP training and intern with one of the technical services committees of the National Assembly of Costa Rica.

Training and Orientation Programs. CRS Specialist, Nina Serafino, to give training lecture on preparing concise, action oriented reports for legislators. She has written a brief training manual that could be translated into Spanish.

Statutory Retrieval System. Has been manually developed in the form of an index of laws and decrees. Information has been input onto computers, development of full text retrieval capacity will be executed by the Assembly's in-house team under Dr. Medina's supervision following procurement of the MIS/LAN.

Bill Status System. Myriam Medina has completed planning and analysis for the full automation of the bill tracking system upon procurement of the MIS/LAN.

External Advisory Support. The ANN is in need of technical assistance. Two ideas have been developed, first, a fund could be set aside to hire Nicaraguan consultants to support the committees, the second idea is to facilitate bringing representatives of different sectors in society together with committees actively considering key legislation. The Center is concerned about prioritizing immediate technical assistance and how to insure that it sets a precedent that will be followed-through on by the National Assembly once the CFD assistance has ended.

Participation in Professional Conferences and Associations. Rhina Mayorga of the Javier Aviles Library of the ANN is interested in pursuing contacts with the Parliamentary Library Association. Myriam Medina is interested in participating in a legal information science meeting in Argentina.

Legislative Publications: Reference Manuals. President Guzman has requested project support for publishing specialized reference texts such as a compendium of Nicaragua's constitutions.

Assembly Debate Record: Diario de Debates. This is not a priority for the ANN nor are the off-set printing commodities contemplated under our cooperative agreement.

Library Support. The Center will receive a proposal from Dr. Mayorga for the reinforcement of the library for ANN members.

Operational Equipment.

- Microfilm Equipment
- Electronic Voting System
- Document Reproduction
- MIS
 1. Myriam Medina and Guillermo Jacoby will work with the ANN MIS staff to review specifications.
 2. Myriam Medina will work with Executive Secretary Juan Manuel Espinoza to establish paraMaders for hiring the analyst and programmer required as counterpart contributions for this procurement.
 3. The LDC will review the procurement package with special attention to the functional and political impact of recommended terminal placements.
 4. The Center has already requested an extension to Alvaro Garcia's mid-April TDY in Nicaragua.

The Center plans to return to Nicaragua between April 11 - 15, 1994 to work with USAID Nicaragua and the ANN to refine this program and begin implementation.

Semi-Annual Report April 1 - September 1, 1994.

Legislative Development Committee Legislative Development committee was impeded by political differences therefore President Guzman has disbanded it and the Junta Directiva will serve as the LDC until President Guzman's term is completed.

Graduate Study Program. Mayling Obregon has completed her Masters Degree at SUNY Albany and is currently working for the ANN as the head of the Budget Analysis Unit.

VI Encuentro de Presidentes de Congresos y Asambleas Legislativas de Centroamerica. CFD, Allen Weinstein and Caleb McCarry were invited to attend the August 1994 meeting. Creation of FOPREL, usefulness of ATELCA was mentioned.

Publications.

1. The Gaceta Parlamentaria
2. The Constitutional Compendium
3. The Constitutional Reforms
4. Directory of the Nicaraguan National Assembly

Public Policy Analysis. Two Nicaraguan staffers will be sent to Chile to work with the two policy institutes, Corporacion 2000 and the Instituto de Libertad y Desarrollo. The internships will be completed in early 1995.

External Advisory Support. Dr. Rafael Solis was contracted as a short-term consultant to provide a diagnostic report regarding the needs of the legislative committees in terms of external advisory support. Report recommended contracting three consultants to work with the legislative committees to help them in their research efforts.

Library Support. The Center received Rhina Mayorga's proposal for Library support and we accepted it. We are seeking competitive bids for the following items: microfilm equipment, magazine subscriptions, encyclopedias, legal reference books and furniture.

President Guzman's visit to Washington, DC and NCSL conference in New Orleans. July 17-23, 1994 - Washington and July 23-29, 1994 New Orleans.

Electronic Voting System. The voting and sound system were fully installed and in working order. We received complaints that there were sound deficiencies in the Assembly and further investigation by Howard Jorenby led us to the discovery that the system had been sabotaged. Mr. Jorenby fixed the problem but the system again failed, shortly after he left. Mr. Jorenby then referred us to Lynn Mader his sub-contracted sound man. Mr. Mader deduced that the problem was caused by the amplifier overheating due to an additional wooden encasement, not originally envisioned as part of the system, but put in place to keep the equipment safe from harm. New Microphones were also needed.

MIS Procurement. IRM suggested that we divide the procurement into two separate portions, general systems components and general applications software and specialized software for the administrative systems. We received approval on September 13, 1994 from the Junta Directiva to begin the first procurement. Myriam Medina presented her report on the ANN bill status and statutory retrieval project at the international conference of judicial systems in Bariloche, Argentina.

Short-term Training. Nina Serafino of the CRS provided short term training and asked participants to chose topics and develop public policy papers for review during a second training session. The second session was originally scheduled for late September but has been postponed until December or January as the participants' research papers have not been completed.

Diagnostics.

1. Budget Diagnostic. CICAP consultants, Francisco Esquivel and Guillermo Zuniga were contracted from June 14 - 18, 1994 to create a report regarding the possibility of reforming the state budget system to permit Congress to exercise political control over expenditures and to identify the problems of the Nicaraguan budget system. President Guzman has not yet commented on the report as he has been out of country so we have asked Mayling Obregon to comment on it, we are waiting for her response.
2. Training Diagnostic. Olman Villareal, Ronny Rodriguez and Roberto Tovar of the CICAP traveled to Nicaragua to perform a needs assessment for the technical staff of the ANN. Once the findings are put into a final form, CFD Consultant, Martin Andersen will distribute it to the ANN, revise it and issue a RFP to local vendors.

Semi-Annual Report November 1, 1994 - April 30, 1995

January 23-26/30, 1995. Trip by Caleb McCarry and Elizabeth Berke to Managua, Nicaragua, to discuss arrangements for implementing the final two quarters of our legislative development project. Following issues were for review and discussion:

1. Re-authorization of the LDC/Junta Directiva to oversee program implementation.
2. Developing a solution to the problem of Phase 1 of the MIS RFP exceeding the cost of funds budgeted for both Phase 1 and 2 of the projected MIS procurement.
3. Accommodating a projected potential \$32,770.63 excess of projected expenses over available obligated funds.
4. Defining program priorities for the remaining two program quarters within the limitations of the aforementioned factors.

President Guzman intended to reinstate the LDC (Guzman, Tefel, Sancho, Cesar, woman Deputy [probably Julia Mena]), travel to the US was not suggested, budget shortfall led to the elimination of several program activities, Training Diagnostic, Academic Training and Short-term training. Priorities: Chile Internship, Budget Program, Microfilm Equipment/Training/TA, Library Support and the MIS.

Graduate Study. Mayling Obregon and Daniel Centeno have completed their degrees and are currently working for the National Assembly of Nicaragua. Mayling Obregon is heading the Budget Analysis Unit and Daniel Centeno is investigating his options before returning to the international relations department.

Short-Term Professional Internships. Chilean internships slated for June, candidate selection will be made an open and competitive process.

Short-Term Training. CRS Specialist, Nina Serafino, provided training to the Legislative Assistants of the ANN on how to prepare action reports for legislators. Participants were asked to prepare policy papers for review at the second training. Papers were never completed, therefore the funds for this program were re-directed, per President Guzman's request, to the budget activity.

Training Diagnostic. Training diagnostic was intended for CICAP to further refine its proposed short term training, rendered inoperable. Further definition will be undertaken by Drs. Medina and Vilchez.

Academic Training. CFD Consultant, Martin Andersen, traveled to Nicaragua from October 30 - November 2, 1994 to consult with ANN leadership about the draft CICAP study, plans for putting said study into effect and the assessment of foreign and local training capabilities to ensure that The Center's efforts would be of the highest quality and reach the largest number of people. Mr. Andersen's meetings at the ANN led him to the conclusion that legislative staff was not interested in short-term training, but rather wished to receive graduate level training for credit. The CICAP study was set aside in favor of contracting a Nicaraguan or outside academic institution for graduate courses on Parliamentary Law, Constitutional Law and Legislative Techniques. Due to budget constraints the Academic training has been removed from the workplan.

Statutory Retrieval and Bill Status System. Will continue to be maintained in the budget.

Technical Assistance for the Design of a Budget Analysis Unit (BAU). Originally Dr. Guzman wanted Ms. Obregon to travel to Bolivia to work with USAID/SUNY and examine the BAU there but after CFD consultation, he agreed that Ms. Obregon can not take the lead in developing the BAU. We suggested he assemble a "gremio" to oversee and define the scope of the BAU. The "gremio" would include Dr. Silvio Conrado, Dr. Cuenca, Dr. Ramirez, Sr. Gorostiaga, Sr. Mayorga, and Sr. De Franco. Once the "gremio" has been convoked and program defined, key leaders from the region will be brought to Nicaragua to support their efforts.

External Advisory Support. Three consultants Ricardo Zambrana Diaz, Gloria Ibarra and Cecilia Loyman Wong received fix price contracts to provide external advisory support to the Integration, Human Rights, Communications, Transportation, Energy and Construction Committees of the ANN. Mr. Zambrana failed to sign a contract with the CFD for his work, without giving reason why and therefore was not paid by the CFD.

Legislative Publications. *La Memoria Legislativa* 1991, 500 copies. *Quien es Quien?* ANN is printing an updated version of this book using its own printing facilities, as well as *Gaceta Parlamentaria*.

Library Support.

1. ANN support for securing duty free entry of commodities.
2. ANN paid leaves of absence for library employees involved in this effort.
3. ANN authorization for Dr, Mayorga to negotiate a long-term microfilm based materials exchange agreement with the Library of Congress.
4. ANN agreement to provide funding to its library in support of its microfilming programs.

Dr. Rhina Mayorga, Director of the Javier Aviles Library of the ANN, traveled to Washington, DC from February 13-17, 1995, to meet with the Library of Congress to define basis of exchange between the two institutions. *Gaceta Parlamentaria* will be used to exchange film on a reel to reel basis as a means of completing the institutions' archives.

Salvadora Blandon, ANN Library staff member, traveled to Washington from February 11 - April 2, 1995 to train with the microphotoduplication department of the LOC to ensure that the exchange of microfilm would be compatible and sustainable.

Equipment supplied to the ANN includes the following; microfilm 35 mm planetary camera, film file cabinet, voltage stabilizers, reader/printers, a blank PO account with the Teran group, reference law books and a set of encyclopedias. A visit by technician Victor Kolman from Elke systems was made to install the camera and train local engineering staff how to trouble shoot the machine.

Operational Equipment.

Daktronics - Lynn Mader to Managua from December 4-7, 1994 to correct sound deficiencies in the ANN, after conference calls to try and determine the problem and a search for an independent sound technician proved fruitless. He concluded that the system's problems were caused by adjustments to the system.

MIS Procurement - Jorge Icaza were selected as the best and final in response to the RFP, but their costs were \$75,000.00 over what we had budgeted for both Phase 1 & 2 of the MIS procurement, negotiations failed and the Center chose to sign a contract with GBM.

Electrical Site upgrade/Air Conditioning. SPERU upgrade was behind schedule due to coordination problems within the Assembly.