**SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY**

San Diego State University delivers courses via video, reducing costs while educating students in rural areas who traditionally would not have access to those programs.

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**CHALLENGE**

At San Diego State University (SDSU), the Instructional Technology Services (ITS) department provides support and leadership in the innovative use of technology, serving as a resource to faculty in the design, development and effective use of learning environments. With three strategic priorities — to meet faculty needs, maximize efficiency and maintain a high-quality technical infrastructure — ITS implemented video conferencing technology at San Diego State more than 10 years ago. Today, as the state faces a budget situation that necessitates travel restrictions, SDSU is even more invested in the use of video.

As Dr. James Frazee, Director of ITS, explains, “We see video conferencing technology as a way to decrease costs, increase convenience and increase instructional function.”

**SOLUTION**

Like other educational institutions in California, SDSU relies on the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC), which operates as an Internet service provider and facilitator for the University’s video conferencing initiatives. As SDSU began investigating video conferencing equipment, CENIC recommended TANDBERG.

“We had a number of systems here from another provider,” recalls Frazee. “In terms of performance, reliability and price, we felt TANDBERG was the better solution.”

Now, the university has TANDBERG video communications at all of its locations, including the main campus in San Diego and its two satellite campuses more than 100 miles east in the Imperial Valley.

“We do a lot of video conferencing with the two campuses in Imperial Valley, in particular with the School of Nursing,” explains Dr. Frazee. “There is a huge need for nurses in the rural Imperial Valley where the economy is heavily based on agriculture. Instructors here in San Diego teach to students in Imperial Valley, with a facilitator on that end to moderate. We have a number of those classes every semester and they are highly popular among the students.”
“We also have a program we just started last semester,” he continues. “It is a Masters in Math Education that is delivered entirely via video conferencing. The instructors are here in San Diego and the students are in the high-desert area of Hesperia, California, which is more than 130 miles to the north. This is a new and innovative use of video technology for us. We could not have offered the masters program to that audience without it.”

In addition, says Frazee, “A lot of faculty work on research efforts with other faculty and subject matter experts at governmental and military organizations. We do a lot of research here — in fact, last year we generated more than $220 million in grants and contracts for research, and video conferencing technology has been instrumental in those efforts.”

Frazee notes that video is also helping with international programs, which are a “priority for the university. We’re working with our College of Extended Studies on building a global technology center; we will certainly find a way to implement additional TANDBERG technology there to enable faculty to respond to globalization in preparing students for the world outside school.”

Further, the university is taking advantage of the TANDBERG Teachers Teaching Teachers (T4) Program, which goes beyond traditional training in video conferencing equipment by providing both basic implementation and pedagogical training for schools.

“The T4 program presents our faculty with new ideas in terms of increasing engagement and interaction in these courses that are delivered over video,” remarks Frazee. “There has been concern that some of the students on the far end are not as engaged as those on the main campus. That’s a function of faculty teaching the way they were taught, which was not in a technology-rich environment. T4 provides strategies for engaging remote learners, allowing us to make the most of that modality.”

RESULTS

The use of video enables San Diego State to “provide more flexibility to students and allows us to offer courses that we might not be able to otherwise,” observes Frazee. “We can bring in people from a distance — both faculty and students, as well as experts in other disciplines and content domains. It’s hard to quantify the value of that.”

Frazee also cites convenience and cost savings as primary benefits of video conferencing — specifically from reducing the need for travel.

“We are mindful of the value of student and faculty time,” he says. “If you can save one trip per week from Imperial Valley to our main campus, that is really powerful.”

“TANDBERG is a money saver for the campus at a base level,” continues Frazee. “There’s this unrelenting pressure of enrollment growth here at SDSU. We’re among the most popular universities in the country. Last fall, we had approximately 62,000 applicants for 5,000 slots in the freshman class. We’re trying to deal with that enrollment growth and manage it well — video conferencing is one of the arrows in the quiver, allowing us to offer programs we could not otherwise, and to actually increase the level of engagement.”