New York College Installs Immersive Video and Engages Community

Marist College deployed Cisco TelePresence to support programs with local businesses and expand educational opportunities.

Executive Summary

Marist College
· **Industry:** Higher Education
· **Location:** Poughkeepsie, NY
· **Total Students:** 6,365

CHALLENGE
· Expand student opportunities by growing local business partnerships
· Support executive meetings, student abroad program, and recruitment
· Bring latest technology into instruction

SOLUTION
· Installed immersive video to save time and cut travel costs
· Integrated video technology with existing technological infrastructure
· Created only immersive video site between New York City and Albany

RESULTS
· Helped repair network issues in minutes as opposed to weeks
· Began "Education Roundtable at Marist" thought leadership series
· Created virtual orientation for Florence Branch Campus study abroad program

Challenge

Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York is a private liberal arts college located on the east bank of the Hudson River. The college was founded in 1929 and today offers 44 bachelor's programs, 12 master's programs, and 21 certificate programs. Since its creation, Marist has connected to local businesses headquartered in Poughkeepsie. This long and steady relationship with the surrounding community has strengthened the academic and technical programs that Marist offers its students.

One of the programs that Marist runs with the Poughkeepsie business community is the Marist Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO). MIPO is a survey research center that leads focus groups and directs polling for elections. The center also conducts other types of research and regularly measures public opinion at the local, state, and national level.

In addition to MIPO, Marist has a Florence Branch Campus in Italy where it runs a study abroad program for many students across the United States. The Florence Branch Campus has partnered with the Istituto Lorenzo de' Medici for the past 30 years and offers several bachelor degrees, a master's degree program, a Freshman Florence Experience (FFE) one-year study abroad tour, semester study abroad offerings, and a Pre-College summer program for rising high school juniors and seniors.

To keep pace with 21st century learning, Marist needed to explore new academic collaborations to benefit its business ties and Florence Branch Campus. When it comes to technology, the goal of the college is to enhance distance learning, collaboration, administrative activities, and institutional programs through a rich multimedia communications environment.

"Part of our strength as a college is the experience we give our students," says Christine Mulvey, director of special projects, telecommunications, and networking at Marist. "We want our students to get instant, real-life experience and to be able to work closely with both the local business community and our full campus branch in Florence."

Many of the students and faculty involved in MIPO have to travel long distances to meet clients, and many local clients cannot reach the global community due to time, travel, and cost issues. For students and staff at the Florence Branch Campus, orientation can be laborious and detract from the time students spend learning. To uncover new opportunities with the local community, and reduce the time and travel associated with managing the Florence Branch Campus, Mulvey and her team looked to videoconferencing.

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Christine Mulvey, Director, Special Projects, Telecommunications & Networking, Marist College

Solution

For Marist, investing in a video solution had the potential to eliminate the time and cost associated with global travel and bring new business opportunities to students in real-time. Since most of Marist's distance education was held online, the college did not have prior video solutions and needed to find a new offering to enhance its growing programs.

"When we started our search for a comprehensive and engaging video solution, we immediately turned to Cisco," says Mulvey. "We have a longstanding relationship with the company, and our network services are Cisco solutions. We knew we needed a highly effective video system that was sophisticated and scalable, which is why we decided on TelePresence."

In September 2010, Mulvey, the Marist information technology (IT) team, and academics from the college attended Cisco® TelePresence demonstrations to experiment with the technology. Cisco TelePresence® is a lifelike, high-definition video system that creates immersive, face-to-face experiences, and enables a powerful collaboration over the network.

Once Mulvey and her team decided that TelePresence was the right solution for Marist's needs, the college worked with Cisco to price the solution competitively and make it a viable option. Marist was also able to move forward with TelePresence due to an economic development grant that the college received from a local utility company. This company was looking to fund educational experiences that were affecting local business development.

The Marist board approved the Cisco TelePresence deployment in May 2011, and the solution was deployed four months later. A Cisco TelePresence System 3010 was installed within Marist's new Hancock Technology Center. Upon deployment, Marist's TelePresence facility became the only site of its kind between New York City and Albany. In addition to the Hancock Technology Center system, Marist installed several other end points throughout the Poughkeepsie campus to integrate its network.

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Results

Since installing the Cisco TelePresence system, Marist has been able to meet in real-time with people in the community, businesses in the city, and academics around the world at a moment's notice. Before using videoconferencing, staff members in the IT department would take weeks to coordinate management or installation meetings. After installing TelePresence, network discussions, questions, or fixes were completed in minutes, which saved Mulvey and her staff time and a considerable amount in repair savings.

"TelePresence enables unique opportunities for our students, faculty, staff, and the local community to connect with each other," says Mulvey. "By using motion video with spatial sound, all of our community members feel like they are a part of our immediate campus."

When it comes to the Florence Branch Campus, faculty are now able to provide advisory sessions and program briefings for students that are much more powerful. Staff members in Italy can also act as virtual participants in live meetings taking place in Poughkeepsie. These faculty members can help to facilitate recruitment interviews through video, which has helped to streamline the on-boarding process.

"In addition to the contributions TelePresence makes to the Florence Branch Campus, we can also use the system for board meetings and executive searches," says Mulvey. "Typically we conduct nationwide searches for talent, and most of the candidates are located across the country in remote areas. With videoconferencing, we no longer have to fly candidates to New York."

Marist has also engaged the local community extensively with immersive video. Since the Cisco TelePresence deployment, the college has played host to several sessions on behalf of local school districts and hospitals. Connectivity to other sites was established through the National LamdaRail TelePresence Network through the regional R & E network NYSERNet membership, and at no additional operating costs to the college.

Marist has also established the "Education Roundtable at Marist" series, which began in spring 2012 and is sponsored by Cisco. At these roundtables, school district superintendents join in conversation with global education leaders and other guests from across the nation, such as participants from the Cisco Briefing Center in Boston. Together, this group discusses the state of education and what is means to be a 21st century educator.

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Product List

VIDEO
- Cisco TelePresence System 3010

Next Steps

Since its TelePresence deployment in 2011, Marist has added redundancies to its infrastructure and deployed video clients for desktop and mobile devices. This enhancement helps ensure that students, faculty, and staff can engage face-to-face on any device.

Looking into the future, Marist is hoping to deploy even more end points for its classrooms so that remote lectures can become a part of everyday curriculum. "When it comes to our technology goals for the 21st century, we've just gotten started," says Mulvey. "By bringing the education and business communities together, TelePresence has enabled us to become more powerful than we thought possible."

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco TelePresence, go to:
http://www.cisco.com/go/telepresence.