

State College of Florida uses HD Video to Shrink Budgets, Increase Hiring and Enhance Online Learning for Students

SCF chooses LifeSize to communicate more effectively while reducing expenses

Organization

State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota

State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota (SCF) is a public state college in the Florida College System offering bachelor and associate degrees.

Established in 1957, SCF is the region's first and largest public college, serving approximately 36,000 college credit students annually at campuses in Bradenton, Lakewood Ranch, and Venice. SCF also offers online opportunities for remote students and those who find it convenient to take classes from their home or work at night and weekends.

Additionally, the college is dedicated to meeting the educational and workforce training needs of employees and businesses in the region. SCF has expanded its mission to include workforce baccalaureate degrees and associate degrees that prepare graduates for professional careers.

In an effort to continually broaden its educational offerings, SCF opened a collegiate charter school in the fall of 2010. The initiative, entitled State College of Florida Collegiate School (SCFCS), provides students with the opportunity to graduate simultaneously with a high school diploma and Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree.

SCFCS is concluding its first year with 6th and 7th grades and preparing to expand to the 8th grade. In subsequent years, SCFCS will continue until 12th grade. The collegiate school is tuition-free, created through a charter with the School District of Manatee County.



Since implementing LifeSize products at SCF Collegiate School and throughout the college, SCF has been able to reduce expenses by \$100K per year.



CHALLENGE

With three locations 40 miles apart, travel costs proved to be too expensive for the school to maintain. Along with cutting \$2 million from the yearly budget, the college also sought to expand eLearning solutions to attract more students and increase internal hiring.



SOLUTION

SCF implemented 20 LifeSize systems among its three campuses and collegiate school. Products included LifeSize® Room™, LifeSize® Room 200™, LifeSize® Room 220™ and LifeSize® Video Center – the HD streaming, recording and auto-publishing solution.



RESULTS

Because of LifeSize, SCF experienced an online student enrollment growth of 5 percent after the first year, a 50 percent reduction in travel expenses for administrators, and is now able to save up to \$30,000 annually by conducting job interviews via HD video.



Challenge

When Dr. Lars Hafner became president of the State College of Florida in 2008, he brought with him a passion for technology and sustainability. However, he had challenges ahead of him.

The Board of Trustees came to Dr. Hafner with a substantial task: find a way to cut \$2 million from the annual budget. Concurrently, SCF needed to improve communication between all of its locations. With three campuses nearly 40 miles apart, administrators frequently drove back and forth between campuses for meetings with colleagues. Not only did this practice take time out of their schedules, the travel expenses were adding up. Finding a creative way to overcome these obstacles quickly became one of Dr. Hafner's key initiatives.

Even though video communication was not a new idea to SCF, the existing technology on all campuses was outdated. SCF's had implemented a standard system several years prior, which became obsolete due to its difficulty of use and lack of quality output. More than ever, the college needed a cost-effective communications tool that offered superior quality.

Dr. Hafner knew he needed to implement several technology initiatives, including improvements to SCF's campus-wide portal, which allows students and administrators to access secure information. Additionally, he joined forces with Florida Lambda Rail, a high-speed Internet service provider to significantly increase bandwidth across campus.

For Dr. Hafner, the light at the end of the tunnel was slowly coming into focus.

SCF's Key Requirements:

Quality: HD audio and video for a seamless, in-room feel between locations

Ease of Use: Simple, intuitive operation that anyone can use without IT assistance

Connectivity: Built-in MCU to connect locations simultaneously

Capture: HD streaming, recording, and auto-publishing capability



"Instructors can't get enough of LifeSize technology. It's an outstanding way to communicate efficiently, effectively and with minimal resources."

- Feng Hou, CIO at State College of Florida.



Solution

After a thorough evaluation of various video communication products, Dr. Hafner chose LifeSize for its superior quality, bandwidth efficiency, and lowest total cost of ownership. The college implemented over 20 LifeSize endpoints across SCF's three campuses and its collegiate school, including LifeSize Room, LifeSize Room 200 and LifeSize Room 220.

LifeSize's flagship product, LifeSize Room, was the industry's first HD video conferencing product on the market. The innovation of the LifeSize Room line has grown incrementally, with LifeSize Room 200 introducing 720p60/1080p30 Full HD resolution and LifeSize Room 220 8-way MCU embedded 8-way Continuous Presence multipoint bridge showing four visible sites, complete with transcoding and all digital I/O. Additionally, LifeSize Room 220 also has a point-to-point throughput of 8Mbps.

LifeSize Video Center

Key Features:

- Recording and live/on demand streaming
- Ease of use
- Integration with teaching tools and content
- Electronic whiteboard integration



LifeSize Video Center, which is the HD streaming, recording and auto-publishing solution, was also installed to enable university administrators and staff to record meetings and training sessions for later playback. With the push of a single button, any video-enabled meeting can be instantly captured and streamed to anyone, anywhere, in crystal-clear HD quality.



Results

State College of Florida is becoming what Dr. Hafner had envisioned when he first became president: a forward-thinking eLearning campus with the strong support of advanced technology.

“Online learning is great, but LifeSize has offered us a nice compromise,” said Dr. Hafner. “There’s so much more positive communication. In order to be the best, we have to use the best, and now we’re ahead of the curve.”

“LifeSize just made the most sense,” Dr. Hafner continued. “We’re saving time, resources, and collaborating with people at different layers within the college system all at once.”

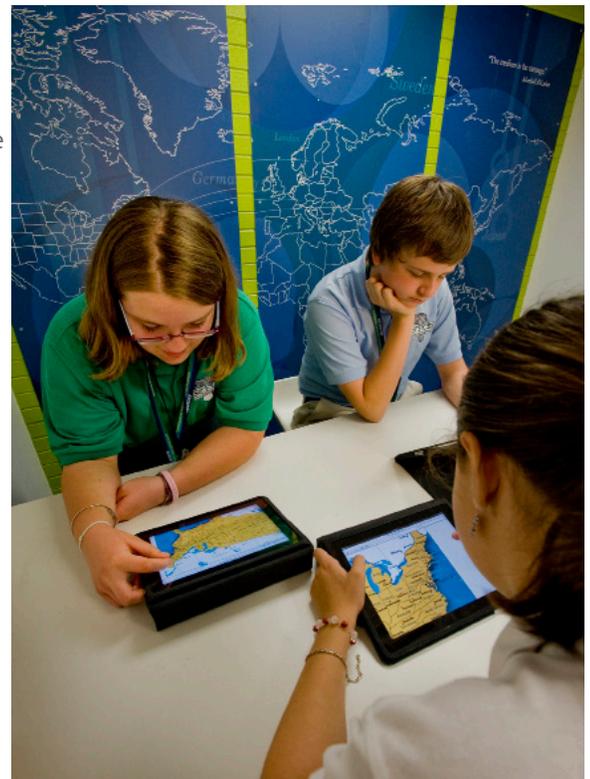
The first benefit of implementing LifeSize was the significant cost savings to the college. Not only did Dr. Hafner’s administration team meet their goal of cutting \$2 million in the first year, they found even more uses for video conferencing that allowed people to connect and share ideas without the expense of travel.

The college was also able to improve its recruitment and interview processes, thanks to LifeSize technology. By interviewing candidates over video, rather than taking the time and expense of flying them to Bradenton, SCF was able to streamline this process and save money, simultaneously. With LifeSize’s unmatched HD quality, the conversation feels as personal as if the hiring manager and candidate were in the same room. As an added benefit, the interviewer can take note of body language and get a feel for a candidate’s personality instantly. Because of this enhanced process, SCF has saved up to \$30,000 per year in travel expenses and has grown 38 percent in the last three years.

The implementation of LifeSize technology at SCF has resulted in better communication for students who can now participate in distance-learning classes from home via HD video. It is evident to the educators and key decision makers at SCF, that without LifeSize, many students would be unable to achieve their collegiate goals. Annual student enrollment has increased 5 percent, which equates to approximately 1,100 new students per year.

Finally, LifeSize has assisted in the development of an exciting collegiate school program, which provides students with the opportunity to graduate from high school with an Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree. This tuition-free public charter school, State College of Florida Collegiate School (SCFCS), opened its doors to 6th and 7th graders in August of 2010. This program is expected to expand through 12th grade in the coming years.

As a result of using LifeSize video solutions, SCF is now able to provide new learning options to students, additional financial support to staff and administration through reduced travel costs, a better hiring and recruitment process for future SCF employees, and above all, helps students achieve their full learning potential, now and in the future.



State College of Florida Collegiate School students testing out LifeSize technology



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