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A CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE

Physical Therapy Department of Leading Canadian University Enhances Distance Learning Initiatives Using Cloud-Based Video Conferencing Platform

The University of Alberta's faculty of rehabilitation medicine enhances its distance education program with LifeSize Connections

Organization

Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

For more than 100 years, the University of Alberta has provided a vibrant and supportive learning environment to over 40,000 students annually. As a result of its efforts, the university is ranked as one of the top research universities in North America and one of the top 100 public universities in the world. With its commitment to the public good and improving the lives of people in Canada and across the globe, the university is taking the lead in placing its country at the global forefront.

Within the university is the faculty of rehabilitation medicine which trains tomorrow's physical and occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists. The faculty provides graduate and doctoral degrees to students, as well as continuing professional education for its alumni community. It is the only freestanding faculty of its kind in North America.

With LifeSize Connections, the faculty of rehabilitation medicine can host guest lecturers from anywhere in the world.

CHALLENGE

The faculty of rehabilitation medicine needed a simple way to host guest lecturers in its physical therapy classes, while complementing its existing LifeSize video environment.

SOLUTION

With LifeSize® Connections™, guest lecturers can dial in from the comfort of their home or office on any PC or Mac computer, without the complexities or cost of travel.

RESULTS

The faculty can now bring remote experts to its virtual classrooms, comprised of students from the home campus and other rural locations, over crystal-clear HD video.

Challenge

The department of physical therapy, within the faculty of rehabilitation medicine, began 50 years ago and has been consistently praised for professional, scholarly and academic excellence.

Because physical therapists are in high demand throughout the country, the department sought to expand its classes beyond the main campus in Edmonton through satellite programs offered at its campuses in Camrose and Calgary. In order to provide exemplary educational experiences for these students, the department deployed a sophisticated HD video conferencing environment with a mix of LifeSize 220 endpoints and LifeSize Video Center for streaming and recording, along with a Lifesize Bridge for multipoint distribution.

By bringing HD video conferencing technology to the department, students in distant locations are able to dial in to physical therapy classes as if they were in the same room as the students in Edmonton. Teaching assistants in each location help facilitate and classes were more productive than ever before. The department took the capability of HD video conferencing a step further as it also uses the technology to bring guest lecturers and outside experts into the classrooms.

Key Requirements:

Simplicity: The solution must be able to work on any desktop computer, with any webcam, anywhere in the world.

Guest invitations: In order to host as many guest lecturers as possible, the solution must be equipped with unlimited guest invitation capability.

Scalability: The solution must be able to scale with the growth of the physical therapy department, as well as other disciplines introduced in the future.

> **"LifeSize Connections is just so easy to use. The user interface is clean and simple, and the unlimited guest functionality is great for outside lecturers. It all works perfectly."**
>
> - DAVE POLVERE, MANAGER OF IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT, FACULTY OF REHABILIATION MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Solution

As existing LifeSize customers, the IT department within the rehabilitation medicine faculty became interested in a new cloud-based platform called LifeSize Connections. They registered for the beta program and were immediately impressed with what they experienced.

Before LifeSize Connections, bringing an outside expert into a classroom via video conferencing brought forth some complexities. To start, the expert would have to find a location that was video-enabled, such as another college campus or hospital. Not only did this take up valuable time, booking fees were extremely expensive and scheduling the video conferencing rooms was painstaking. But after experiencing the new cloud-based platform from LifeSize, it quickly became clear that their issues could be resolved with the service's unlimited guest invitation capability.

"LifeSize Connections is just so easy to use," said Dave Polvere, manager of IT systems and support, faculty of rehabilitation medicine. "The user interface is clean and simple, and the unlimited guest functionality is great for outside lecturers. It all works perfectly."

To bring in a remote expert with this new solution, the department simply sends an email to the lecturer instructing him or her to download the software, plug in their webcam and launch the program.

"Previously, we used to ask our guest lecturers to 'skype in' to classes, but now we can just send them a free LifeSize Connections invitation," said Polvere. "The picture quality is far superior and we know Connections will just work."

Results

The faculty of rehabilitation medicine will continue to use LifeSize Connections in the delivery of its distance physical therapy classes and soon, to other disciplines as well.

They are also finding the solution useful in administrative settings to communicate with remote individuals, from committee meetings to doctoral thesis defenses.

With the help of LifeSize HD video endpoints, LifeSize Video Center and LifeSize Connections, the faculty's physical therapy department is stronger than ever and it is only a matter of time before the technology is used in other university areas. No expert is too far away to share their knowledge and experience with their students, whether they are across Canada or anywhere in the world. Alternatively, rural students in Camrose and Calgary are now able to receive a world-class education from the comfort of their hometown, without the hassle or expense of travel.

"LifeSize Connections is so much better than any other cloud-based video communications platform I've seen and that is why staff reception has been so positive," said Polvere. "We have a lot of big plans for this technology as our programs continue to grow."

Physical therapy students learn techniques over video conferencing.

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