The university has invested in a full line of LifeSize endpoints and infrastructure solutions to offer the highest quality video experience possible.

Organization

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA

For more than 140 years, the University of Arkansas has provided a world-class education to students from over 120 nations across 200 academic programs. With more than 24,500 students, the university is formally classified as “a very high research university.” This classification places the school in the top 2 percent of the nation’s 4,600 universities.

Along with its outstanding academic programs, the University of Arkansas also aims to provide flexible, convenient educational opportunities to all of its students to provide the best learning environment possible, regardless of geographic location.

Challenge

As academic programs grew at the University of Arkansas, so did its need for a standardized video conferencing environment.

Solution

IT decision makers chose LifeSize based on positive past experiences with the technology and high recommendations from colleagues. They purchased bundles of LifeSize® 220 Series™ endpoints, as well as LifeSize® Bridge™, LifeSize® Video Center™ and LifeSize® ClearSea™.

Results

The university is now using video conferencing in a variety of disciplines including nursing, math, engineering and education, as well as in their administrative functions. Some degrees are offered purely online, so students can achieve their academic goals regardless of distance.
Challenge

Video conferencing was not a new concept to the administrators at the University of Arkansas. For years, the university had various vendors’ solutions in the administrative offices for meetings, team collaborations and other day-to-day business purposes. At that time, the systems were used only as two-way communications devices, since no bridging was in place for multiparty calling. Simultaneously, classrooms were also equipped with cameras to record classes for students to access and playback on Blackboard Learn™, but no live video conferences were possible with the school’s current technology.

However as the school’s academic programs grew, so did its need for a more robust video conferencing environment. For example, the nursing school at the university had partnered with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), based in Little Rock – over 200 miles from the main campus in Fayetteville. In order for this collaboration to work, the school needed an HD video conferencing solution that could show the students medical procedures in real time and enable them to ask instructors questions.

By making our academic programs more accessible to more students in more places through our relationship with LifeSize, we believe we are fulfilling the university’s vision of transforming lives and inspiring our students to achieve their educational goals.

- Mike Duncan, IT Services, University of Arkansas
Solution

In order to conduct a thorough evaluation of various video technologies, the university created a committee to test all of the major vendors’ solutions. LifeSize video endpoints were already used on campus for administrative purposes and always garnered positive feedback, so the decision to standardize on LifeSize solutions came fairly easy to the committee.

“Once we decided to put video technology in the classroom, it just made sense to standardize on one vendor and purchase the entire package: endpoints, infrastructure and mobile support,” said Mike Duncan, IT services at the University of Arkansas. “LifeSize not only had all of the pieces, it was at an unbeatable value. I had always heard great things about LifeSize from colleagues, but seeing it for myself and realizing how much we could get for the money really solidified the decision for the university.”

Through a partnership with a major distributor, the University of Arkansas was able to order bundles of various LifeSize 220 series endpoints, as well as a number of infrastructure applications such as LifeSize Bridge for multiparty video calls, LifeSize Video Center for streaming and recording, and LifeSize ClearSea for desktop and mobile support. Because LifeSize technology is standards-based and works with all third-party vendors’ systems, the university was still able to utilize its legacy systems in which they had already invested.
Results

Not only has the nursing program benefitted from the HD video collaboration technology, the university has expanded video to even more classrooms and now offers online-only degrees that take place entirely via video.

“We have especially loved LifeSize Video Center’s integration with Blackboard, and as a result, we are now able to offer degrees that are entirely online, such as a graduate degree in education technology and an online nursing degree,” said Duncan. “The students can just log in to the platform and watch the lectures at their convenience from any location. I expect that this program will continue to grow in the future as more degrees are offered.”

Other unique use cases have occurred as a result of implementing video in the classroom. For example, the University of Arkansas School of Law is now able to connect via livestream with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock’s William H. Bowen School of Law, and students can participate in mock trials over HD video. Additionally, the school has found great value in using video for “overflow” classrooms, in which the physical classrooms are simply too small to accommodate all of the students. In this case, another classroom is used with LifeSize HD video endpoints connecting the two. Additionally, the college of education has placed video systems on mobile carts to wheel around from classroom to classroom.

The administrative staff also continues to benefit from video collaboration, especially on their mobile devices through LifeSize ClearSea. Because LifeSize ClearSea can be used with over 50 mobile devices including iOS and Android, it has been deployed across 10 different departments, as well as in certain classrooms in the graduate-level math and biomedical engineering disciplines. The technology is wildly popular for its convenience and ease of use.

“By making our academic programs more accessible to more students in more places through our relationship with LifeSize, we believe we are fulfilling the university’s vision of transforming lives and inspiring our students to achieve their educational goals,” said Duncan. “Video conferencing has opened so many doors for our administrators, faculty and students, and I am fully confident that we will continue to invest in this technology for years to come.”