UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON AT VICTORIA

Overview

- The university needed to connect classes across all campuses

- The solutions needed to fit into their budget and easy to use

- They were able to scale the solution across multiple campuses and clinics

UHV
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON - VICTORIA

The University of Houston at Victoria is a four-year state university and is part of four distinct institutions in the University of Houston System. Founded in 1971, UHV has an enrollment of over 4,300 students.

UHV has a distance learning program called ITV - Interactive Television. This program allows students on both the Victoria campus and the Katy campus to interact via video conferencing. Students and faculty at both campuses can interact with each other in real-time from their various locations. The ITV program has been in place at UHV for more than 10 years. In addition to two state-of-the-art conference rooms, there are six dedicated ITV classrooms in Victoria and a corresponding six dedicated classrooms in Katy.

With many advancements in video conferencing technology, the university decided to update its existing video conferencing infrastructure. "We were using older, outdated legacy equipment that was giving us many problems," explained Tony Rodriguez, Coordinator of ITV Operations for the university.

In addition to upgrading aging legacy equipment, the faculty wanted to move toward a desktop client environment instead of dedicated room systems. They also wanted a solution with Scalable Video Coding (SVC). SVC technology automatically assesses the bandwidth of each connection and adjusts the quality of the video experience without any disruption to the user. "Our old system didn't have SVC so any bandwidth glitches were a big issue," said Tony.

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>
> *TONY RODRIGUEZ*
> *COORDINATOR OF ITV OPERATIONS*

Action

The university decided to equip its growing ITV program with IDVideoPhone, a cloud-based video conferencing solution that met all of their needs. There was a seamless transition between the old system and the new, and the new solutions were adopted quickly by faculty and staff.

Each classroom and conference room is now equipped with dedicated lighting, cameras, and laptop designed specifically for ITV classes and are optimized for the distance learning environment.

Results

Primarily an evolutionary process for an already bustling program, IDVideoPhone delivers a diverse range of classes for the university across all of its programs, serving about 500 students in all.

Classes are typically delivered in real-time with students and instructors in one location, streaming out to students at another location. Instructors will often alternate which live location they are teaching from so students can experience both distance learning as well as in-person learning.

The technical support staff makes sure the room is set up and ready to go before each class. They make sure audio and video are working correctly and once the instructor arrives they can make any adjustments quickly.
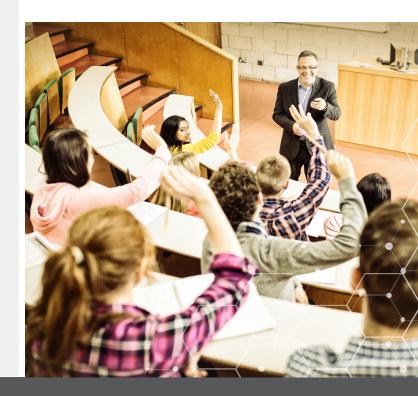
"Some students like it and some have a harder time. Some students complain that it is harder to interact with the instructor at a distance. That is why a lot of times the instructor will take turns being on each campus. But the truth is that without this technology, half the students wouldn't have access to these classes at all," explained Tony.

In addition to regularly scheduled classes, occasionally one-time approvals for students who may need a class at another location are extended so they can connect from home. The system is also used for new employee orientation and even guest speakers.

The university is growing and expanding with a new library, student commons, and a STEM facility being built in the near future. The plan is for the ITV program to expand right along with it.

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