Using Help Desk, Support and Analytics Tools to Create a Better Learning Experience

California State University--East Bay

ENROLLMENT:
Approximately 14,500 students across 3 campuses

LOCATION:
Serving eastern counties of San Francisco Bay Area, CA

Challenges

- Desire to standardize and simplify classroom A/V configurations
- Reactive maintenance which negatively impacts learning experience

Key Results

- Standardized classrooms and dashboard interface
- Real-time system dashboard to do pro-active maintenance
- Improved classroom technology planning

Background

California State University--East Bay, located in the San Francisco Bay area, has two campuses and a professional center in downtown Oakland. The university supports approximately 14,500 students and 150 classrooms.

Problem

The Director of Classroom Technology, Rich Avila, recognized that his team was operating from a reactive position and negatively impacting the learning process when the technology in the classroom didn't work or when the instructor couldn't operate it efficiently. The end customer at a college is the student, and CSU East Bay felt that it needed to find more opportunities to be proactive in terms of enhancing the learning experience across campus.

Avila wanted to ensure that students and faculty were maximizing their valuable instructional hours--he wanted to be able to anticipate the problems that might occur when it came to classroom technology. He wanted a system that allowed him to do the following:

- Inventory and monitor classroom equipment remotely to anticipate repairs and eliminate downtime.
- Standardize the configuration of A/V equipment across campus to encourage and simplify use for instructors.
- Offer real-time remote help desk assistance to instructors should they encounter malfunctioning equipment or not be able to deploy the tools they need during class.
- Enable existing staff to easily manage room configurations and campus growth without having to bring in outside contractors and specialty programming services to empower the department to be more self-sufficient.
- Understand what technology is being used by faculty to manage equipment and maintenance budgets more effectively and efficiently with real-time data.

Solution

CSU East Bay needed a solution it could deploy campus-wide to standardize its A/V equipment configurations and interfaces for both faculty and IT A/V management. Because the institution wasn't planning a classroom refresh at this time, it's primary focus was to deploy an enterprise AVmanagement platform and Utelogy enabled them to continue to use the AV equipment they'd already deployed, and because it was software-based, it gave them the ability to scale.

Results

CSU East Bay has deployed approximately 60 classrooms so far with the Utelogy platform and total deployment is expected to be around 150 rooms. It's using two in-house AV engineers to actually do the deployment, programming, and room set-up which allows the department to become more self-sufficient.

Proactive Maintenance to Minimize Downtime

The AV department has been able to move to more of a proactive means of managing those classrooms that are already equipped with Utelogy. Staff come in each morning and review the system dashboard to ensure classrooms are ready for faculty when they arrive.

"The fix used to be rolling in a media cart and eating up 10 to 20 minutes of class time because the instructor had no projector. Now we can troubleshoot and fix remotely, and dispatch a tech only if we need to," said Avila. "Most remote fixes are down to two or three minutes and if we have a physical fix, it's five to eight minutes of downtime and that's dramatically improved the experience. The ultimate goal is to eliminate the impact all together and be able to anticipate and fix issues before they happen."

The impact to management and administration of the AV network has also been beneficial. Daily reports allow for improved staff management because they can proactively schedule next day activities and it provides a good audit trail for maintenance tracking.

Standardized Dashboard

Faculty now have a standardized dashboard interface to access all of the components in the room—document cameras, projectors, etc. The department created a two minute training video for faculty that can be accessed on-demand. In a recent faculty survey, more than 70% of those answering the survey indicated they were very comfortable with the technology.

Planning Classroom Technology

While there are no records indicating what technology was used prior to deploying Utelogy, the department is experiencing an increase in demand for classroom technology components. "We've been able to work with departments that want to move forward deploying more technology in their classrooms because they see that we've delivered more reliability—that the equipment is there when they need it and want it. They see that the Utelogy interface is relatively easy to use and that the support is easy to access, and we can usually fix it quickly over the phone or the network should they have a problem."

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