

CASE STUDY

University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine

INTRODUCTION

The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM), one of only 28 veterinary colleges in the United States, was established in Knoxville in 1974. Since the college first opened, more than 1,600 students have completed their doctor of veterinary medicine degree, and the college's clinical program has treated more than 945,000 patients.

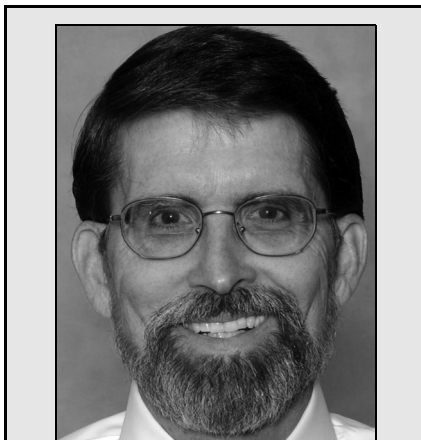
CHALLENGE

Administrators in the College of Veterinary Medicine sought to maximize the use of technology in their teaching, so the college's Instructional Resources (IR) team set out to take advantage of online technologies. "We have a computer-literate faculty that is willing and anxious to try new technologies," says Michael Sims, professor of veterinary medicine at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine and director of Institutional Resources.

Institutional Resources wanted to offer a variety of technology options that faculty and students could choose from to enhance their individual teaching and learning styles, respectively. In the process of helping keep pace with ever-changing technologies, the IR team also worked to steer the college away from technologies that were too complex and thus leading to technological difficulties and discouraged users.

"We have always been interested in engaging students to participate interactively in their own education, in the classroom as well as in study groups," says Sims. "And we wanted to deliver content as near to 'anywhere/anytime' as possible, to minimize the time spent in locating relevant subject matter."

"We have a particular interest in capturing," says Sims. "For our purposes, it is important to get data, sound, and video all on one screen ... integrated in a format



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that is Web-enabled. We started looking for a system that could do it all.”

SOLUTION

The technology resource center on the University of Tennessee’s main campus was already using the Mediasite Web communications system. The center leased the technology to the College of Veterinary Medicine for a trial period, which concluded with very positive feedback.

“Interactively engaging students in the classroom is a very important part of teaching, especially when some or all of the attendees are at a distant site,” says Sims. “Mediasite has allowed our college to interact with others at remote sites without unnecessary complications to the presenter. Some professors in the college have used Mediasite to record special presentations and seminars. Archived presentations allow ‘would be’ attendees to participate at a later time. With this technology, we can invite a professor from another university to teach a whole course, part of a course, a lecture, or even participate in a classroom question and answer session. Can you imagine being a student and asking questions to a world-renown expert just because he or she is willing to be a virtual guest in a class focused on his or her area of expertise?” asks Sims.

One innovative application that has emerged at UTCVM is using Virtual Microscopy to share microscope slides. Glass slides are digitized in high resolution, in such a way that a computer replaces the traditional microscope. The digital images are then used in presentations or exams, archived, replicated, transferred over networks, distributed on a CD, integrated into course material on the Web site or via the school’s intranet—all to allow ubiquitous access. “I am convinced that digital microscopy has the potential to replace glass slides in some teaching labs,” says Sims.

RESULT

Since using Mediasite and other technologies, UTCVM has recorded content ranging from classroom lectures to conferences, large and small.

The college is now considering using distance education technologies to capture classroom lectures and conferences and will soon use this technology to offer continuing education to graduate veterinarians.

“With video-streaming technologies, students who have moved away from campus can still continue to learn from our experienced faculty,” says Sims. “Providing students with the opportunity to learn from professors at other leading veterinary colleges would also be a distinct advantage for our graduates.”

In the future, the college looks forward to interacting with other colleges and universities specializing in Veterinary Medicine through Mediasite. “The collaboration of our experienced teaching staff, coupled with that of the other 28 veterinary colleges in North America, would allow for a cross-listing of courses which would present a unique learning experience for veterinary students,” says Sims.

BENEFITS

- Engages students to participate interactively in their own education, in the classroom and in study groups;
- Delivers anywhere, anytime content to minimize the time spent in locating relevant subject matter;
- Interactively engages distant education students through archived presentations, guest lecturers and real-time Q&A over the Web; and
- Encourages innovative uses of other technologies such as medical imagery.