

CASE STUDY

Wayne State University Takes the Lead in Library and Information Science Using Mediasite

The Wayne State University Library and Information Science Program can trace its origins to 1918, when the Detroit Normal Training School began offering courses in school librarianship to elementary teachers in the Detroit Public School system. After the training school became the Detroit Teachers College in 1923, the library science program grew and it remains one of only 57 American

Library Association-accredited degree programs of library and information science in the United States and Canada. In recognition of the growth of the program and the expansion of its curriculum, the name of the program was changed to the Library and Information Science Program (adding information science) in 1993. The program has 15 full-time and 60 part-time faculty members.



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CHALLENGE

Joseph Mika, then director of the Library and Information Science Program, sought to take advantage of a technology that would enhance student learning. The school already had transitioned from a successful on-site program to four off-campus sites to offering online courses using the Blackboard course management system. The next logical step seemed to be the integration of live classes for remote students.

Mika discovered Mediasite while attending a recruitment meeting for directors and assistant deans more than 2 years ago. At that meeting, he spoke with the assistant dean of the university business school, who raved about Mediasite, so Mika went to see it in operation. About 2 months later, the Library and Information Science Program had its own Mediasite system.

SOLUTION

"I went after something I knew worked and had a chance to observe," said Mika. "The equipment itself is very straightforward and easy to use. It only took a matter of hours to get up and running after watching the demo by Sonic Foundry personnel and using the technology ourselves."

The Wayne State University Library and Information Science Program utilizes Mediasite to capture a minimum of 25-28 recordings per month. Seven teachers capture four lectures per week. Program faculty have affectionately nicknamed Mediasite "ECHO," which stands for "enhancing courses held online." "I love Mediasite," said John Heinrichs, assistant professor in library and information science. "It's a whole new way of teaching. Now I can stop, run polls to see if students understand the content. I can see if there are any questions being keyed into the moderator function and answer those right away."

Working students also are able to save time that otherwise would be spent in transit between school and their places of employment. In fact, some employers are so appreciative that their student employees can remain on-site, they allow them to view Mediasite classes at the office or at another convenient location. "The students seem to really love it," said Heinrichs. "They don't have to travel during tumultuous Michigan winters and are able to review lectures—stop and replay, which they obviously can't do in a conventional classroom environment."

RESULT

Besides online course content, Mediasite now is being used to capture new student orientations. "We used to require students

to come to our campus for orientation classes. Now we can capture orientation online and provide a virtual orientation," said Mika. Additionally, Mika recently received a grant that would allow department faculty to offer mediasite continuing education curricula to rural librarians not wishing to undertake a master's degree.

Mediasite has changed Heinrichs' very own approach to teaching. Since the program purchased Mediasite, Heinrichs takes care to enunciate his words and to avoid meandering around the classroom as he drives home a compelling point. Heinrichs now uses masking tape to corner off the area in which he must remain so that he can be sure to be visually captured by Mediasite.

"It's not a question of saving money. It's more an issue of increasing the student body by reaching remote individuals who otherwise would not be in our program," Mika said. "Mediasite is helping us expand the benefits of our teachings as well as increase our student enrollment," said Heinrichs. "It's not just a teaching and learning tool; it's a driver of growth."

BENEFITS

- Provides faculty with immediate feedback on student comprehension during class;
- Enables students to time-shift, allowing them to maintain employment while still enrolled in school;
- Allows faculty to communicate with students who are geographically dispersed around the state, particularly during extreme winter driving conditions;
- Improves comprehension as students stop and replay lectures for review; and
- Increases student enrollment while expanding the benefits of instruction to new audiences.