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—John DeAngelo, Associate Dean of IT



The Fox School of Business creates innovative eLearning program with WebEx.



INDUSTRY

Higher education

WEBEX APPLICATIONS

WebEx Meeting Center, Support Center, Training Center

SUMMARY

The Fox School of Business wanted to develop a highly interactive eLearning program. Using WebEx Training Center, The Fox School created an online curriculum that fully replicates the in-classroom experience. WebEx eLearning programs provide The Fox School with a competitive advantage, extend the reach of its offerings, and optimize faculty resources. The Fox School of Business also uses WebEx solutions to streamline communications between campuses worldwide.

ABOUT THE FOX SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

- **Line of Business**
Business management education
- **Headquarters**
Philadelphia, PA
- **Number of Employees**
300
- **Target Market**
Undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and continuing students
- **WebEx Customer Since 2007**

With more than 6000 students and 51,000 alumni, The Fox School of Business at Temple University is the largest, most comprehensive business school in the Philadelphia area and among the largest in the world. Established in 1918, The Fox School has earned a worldwide reputation for its comprehensive educational offerings and technology integration initiatives. Today, the school has 145 full-time faculty and offers undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs in a variety of business concentrations, as well as on-site corporate training.

The Challenge

The Fox School of Business strives to find innovative ways to raise the quality of learning to new levels. In 1999, the school became one of the first in the nation to adopt Blackboard’s eLearning solution. “Blackboard made it possible for us to create our first eLearning program and offer our entire MBA curriculum online,” says John DeAngelo, Associate Dean of IT for the Fox School of Business. As the program grew, however, the school wanted to create a more interactive, collaborative experience for its online students. “To raise the quality of the program, we needed our online courses to capture the same energy as our live classrooms,” says DeAngelo.

To find the right online collaboration tool, The Fox School researched and evaluated several solutions, including Wimba, Adobe Acrobat Connect, the Echo360System, and Microsoft Office Live Meeting. “We used Adobe Connect for a while and hosted it on campus,” says DeAngelo. “But if more than five off-campus students accessed the system, it would crash. Live Meeting also limited the number of participants and did not offer high-quality VoIP.”

The Solution

After a long search, The Fox School of Business finally found WebEx. DeAngelo recalls, “We knew that WebEx was widely accepted by the business community. This was an important factor for us.” The school also chose WebEx because it provided highly interactive tools, supported large numbers of users reliably, and was very easy to use.

As the primary faculty member spearheading the interactive eLearning effort, Darin Kapanjie, Faculty Coordinator of Fox Online Initiatives, was the first to use WebEx Training Center. To make the interaction in his online business calculus classes exactly the same as his in-person courses, Kapanjie secured a grant that provides each student with a VoIP headset, a Wacom tablet, and a webcam. “WebEx enables me to share my notes and sample problems in Microsoft Office OneNote with the students online,” he says. Using their tablets and digital pens, students handwrite their calculations. Kapanjie explains, “I use the WebEx pass control feature to enable students to share their desktops, showing me and the rest of the class how they arrived at a solution. Students complete and submit handwritten exams through WebEx as well.” In addition, WebEx Training Center breakout capabilities make it possible for Kapanjie to split his classes of 25 into smaller groups to work collaboratively.

Today, Kapanjie fully utilizes the robust capabilities of WebEx technology. “I use WebEx Network-Based Recording to capture every class and then post the recordings on Blackboard. This makes it possible for students to review as often as they need to,” he says. Kapanjie also relies on WebEx VoIP. “Most students don’t have land lines these days.

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Because of the high-quality VoIP WebEx offers, students don't have to use up their cell phone minutes to attend our courses," he says.

At The Fox School of Business, use of WebEx is spreading campus-wide. Kapanjie's success is leading other faculty members to create online classes using WebEx. The Fox School has also adopted both WebEx Training Center and WebEx Meeting Center to conduct administrative meetings with satellite campuses located around the world. In addition, WebEx Support Center enables the IT department on the main campus to support administrators and faculty located on all campuses in the Philadelphia area.

The Benefits

WebEx improved the quality of distance learning at The Fox School, providing the school with a competitive advantage and helping it maintain its position as an innovator in business education. According to DeAngelo, "Most business schools provide a passive distance learning program, much like the one we used to offer.

WebEx made it possible for us to create a very attractive online offering that fully replicates the face-to-face learning experience for our students. Students have commented that they love the new online classes."

WebEx enabled The Fox School of Business to enhance its Executive Management Program. "We used WebEx to create small-group forums for junior executive students to meet remotely without faculty," says DeAngelo. "Interactive methods such as this one enable students to continue learning in a collaborative way between class meetings. By making it possible for us to provide innovative offerings to our students, WebEx helps us maintain a distinct competitive edge."

WebEx also enabled The Fox School to extend the reach of its high-quality educational offerings while optimizing faculty time. In the past, when faculty members traveled between the school's worldwide campuses, they were unable to continue teaching. "Thanks to WebEx, our professors can now teach their classes from wherever they are. Geography is no longer a factor, and we maximize our faculty's knowledge and productivity," says DeAngelo.

The Future

As more and more faculty members move their online classes from Blackboard to WebEx, The Fox School of Business has ambitious goals for the future. The school plans to make both undergraduate and graduate degrees available online through WebEx while developing new certificate programs for underserved student populations, such as working mothers. And as one of the largest Blackboard installations in the country, The Fox School plans to utilize the built-in Blackboard integration features in WebEx. "There's so much we've done with WebEx," says DeAngelo, "but the opportunities are endless."

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HIGHLIGHTS

- By enabling The Fox School of Business to provide interactive, innovative online offerings, WebEx improved the quality of the school's distance learning program.
- WebEx eLearning provides The Fox School with a competitive advantage, helping it maintain its position as an innovator in business education.
- WebEx enabled The Fox School to extend the reach of its high-quality educational offerings while optimizing faculty resources.