

ALL-IN-ONE

Union County College Takes the Latest Approach to Classroom Technology



College performs large-scale modernization using 50 uniform, user-friendly and fully integrated Tecom podiums

By Amy Kenigsberg

Union County College, established in 1933, has always maintained a strong commitment to providing facilities that prepare students for the intellectual and technological demands of the 21st century.

Recently, Stephen Kato, UCC's Director of Media Services, was presented with the opportunity to outfit UCC's new Kellogg Building facilities in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on a large scale – installing audio-visual capabilities in 50 classrooms.

"I used to say that our multimedia classrooms were easy to use, but not intuitive. Frankly, it was intimidating and confusing," says Kato. "Faculty had to be trained to operate a rack full

would contain his maintenance costs as well as reduce staff anxiety by learning to use a single, uniform, user-friendly system.

Seeking and Finding: Tecom's TechPod

While attending the Government Video & Technology Expo in Washington, D.C., Kato saw Tecom's TechPod Multimedia Lecterns. He quickly intuited that he had found the answer.

Kato chose the Tecom TPI-12 as it represented a complete solution – furniture, control system, interactive screen, document camera and a high-end computer. "The built-in public address system was a bonus," explains Kato. "The TechPod also provides instant Internet connectivity, video streams, and full-time access to UCC's own network resources."

The TechPod TPI-12 is an all-in-one lectern that has every multimedia capability built in. All devices, including LCD projectors, laptops, and CD/DVD players, are run from a single control panel. Plus, simply closing the unit's door not only secures the equipment, but also automatically turns off any equipment that may have been left on, including the projector. At UCC, automatic shutdown translates into reduced energy and bulb-replacement costs.

Tecom bases its product designs upon presenters' feedback to ensure that they meet the needs of lecturers while providing the high performance, durability and cost effectiveness that institutions demand. The fact that Tecom had a solid reputation with installations worldwide in corporate, educational and military settings added a level of comfort for Kato to make his decision.

A Smooth Installation: Technology and Teamwork

After deciding to purchase 50 TechPods for UCC, Kato knew he had to have a solid partner

in system integration to help handle the logistics and installation process. His due diligence led him to turn to Doug Cook, the Visual Systems Group Sales Manager for the Video Corporation of America (VCA). Like Kato, Cook has been in the industry for more than 30 years. VCA was founded in 1972 and is long established as a leading system integrator on the East Coast.

The full installation team included Chris Finn, VCA Project Manager; Patrick Gallagher, Assistant Manager of the UCC Media Center; one UCC tech, two VCA techs; and two technical trainers from Tecom, on hand to provide training to both instructors and A/V staff. The UCC team laid the necessary groundwork by installing the infrastructure on time, ensuring everything was ready for the VCA and Tecom teams.

"We only needed about two hours of installation per podium," says Finn. "The TechPods were shipped pre-wired and required only the simple integration of a Sharp XG-C435X projector with each unit. The only internal wiring we had to take care of was the A/V I/O interface in the floor and speaker installation."

Thanks to the cooperation, coordination and communication among the team, the entire installation took less than three weeks. Everything that was planned actually occurred in sequence, on time, and on budget.

The Result: Heavy Deployment, Happy Tech Staff, Happy Instructors

The last critical step was training the faculty to use the new lecterns; this proved to be a pleasant surprise for the instructors. "The units



are robustly and elegantly designed, yet are very intuitive and user friendly," says Kato. "The learning curve was very short, and the staff quickly acclimated to the point where many have abandoned the use of the white boards in favor of using the TechPods. Our first users were faculty members from our nursing program. They were up to speed in less than 20 minutes and have been using the system on a daily basis."

The design isn't only intuitive for the instructors, as the TechPod's internal design insures easy maintenance and part replacement. This frees the staff to do minimal preventative maintenance.

Kato believes that Tecom has provided a huge step forward for instructional technology in the classrooms. He says that the TechPod-equipped classroom has become the model for the rest of the College.

Cook is similarly happy with the potential the TechPod provides for VCA. "Not only is Steve Kato planning on buying more units as UCC continues to revamp its campuses, but we're getting a lot more sales as Tecom is becoming better known. We now have three large orders in process as well as a backlog of requests for a demonstration unit to be placed at customer sites. The TechPod will keep us very busy for some time to come."

"We've had successful installations in many mission-critical environments, including academic, business and military facilities," say Aviv Brosilovski, CEO, Tecom. "Being chosen by UCC and working with well-respected system integrators such as VCA furthers our ability to present our intuitive, fully integrated lecterns for any lecture hall."

Amy Kenigsberg was an editor at a leading AV systems integration magazine and now is a Principal Consultant for K2 Strategic Innovations, a communications and public relations company.

About Tecom Electronics Ltd.:

Tecom Electronics, a privately held company that began in 1996, uses a dynamic and technologically advanced approach to provide simple solutions to managing AV equipment in training and educational facilities. Tecom manufactures the TechPod, a breakthrough, all-in-one multimedia lectern, offering a fully integrated, well-designed, and easy-to-use presentation solution for the most demanding AV requirements. Tecom's reliable solutions have been installed worldwide in educational, government and military training facilities, corporate centers, and houses of worship.

www.tecpodium.com

About VCA:

Established in 1972, VCA is the largest systems integrator and reseller of visual communication systems in the Northeast. Based in Somerset, New Jersey, it has more than 125 employees in three locations in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, and sales revenues upward of \$60 million.

www.vca.com

About HMA:

Haddonfield Micro Associates, Tecom REP firm in the NE, was formed in 1988 by the firm's founder and President, Sheldon A. Master. Today, HMA's success in developing strategic channels of distribution for manufacturers is well documented; the professional relationships developed provide the manufacturer with an opportunity to reach over 150 dealer locations throughout the Mid-Atlantic and New York regions.

www.hmassociates.net

of switches, amplifiers, and controls. Plus, the earlier system was bulky, had a large footprint, and was expensive to maintain. Instructors would leave after a lecture thinking that the unit was shut down when it wasn't. We spent a lot of time replacing burnt out, expensive projector bulbs and paid high electric bills."

With 32 years of experience in the A/V field, Kato was exceptionally qualified to determine the best approach to upgrading the college's equipment. Kato sought an easy-to-use, intuitive, and uniform solution that could be deployed campus wide while minimizing the variety of components within the system. This