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The Greentree Gazette

NOVEMBER 2005

Donna Shalala and the University of Miami

A perfect match

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A TRIO OF PRESIDENTS

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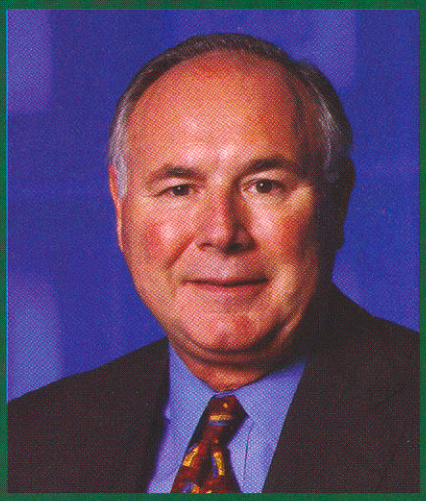
The former HHS Secretary wants the University of Miami solidly among the world's best research universities with an undergraduate experience rich in diversity.



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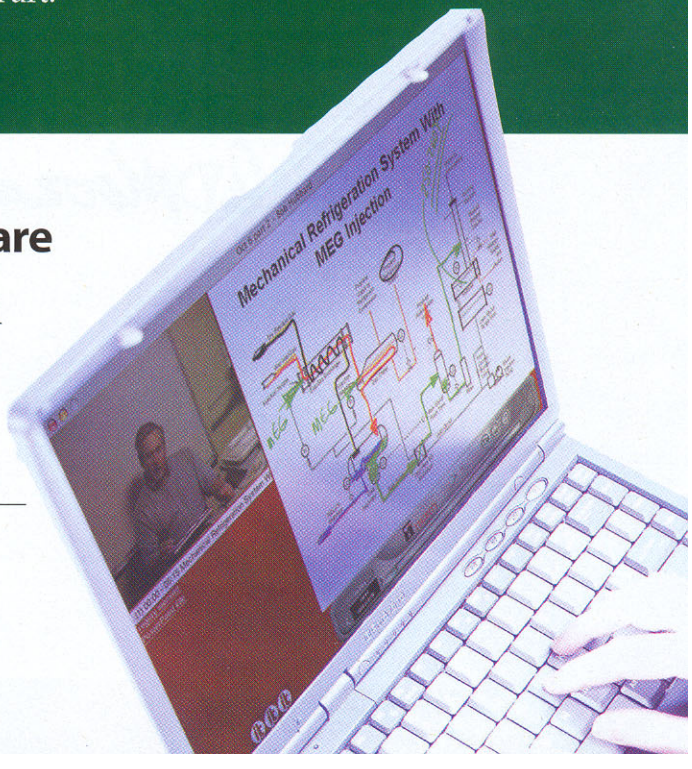
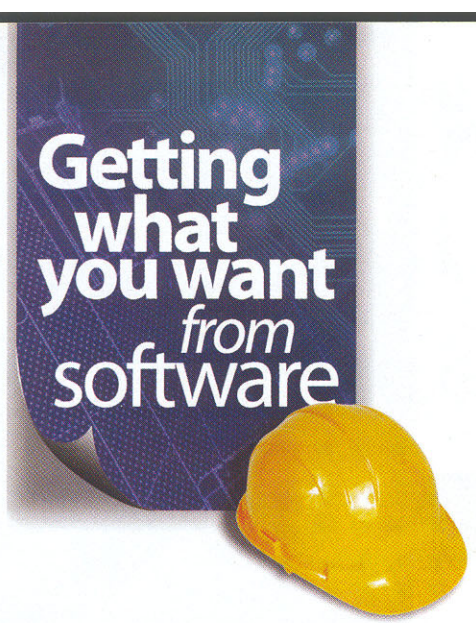


Getting what you want *from* software



Enhancing the learning experience—easily

Coppin State University selects and installs a new learning management system that enables students to re-experience classroom lectures alongside their notes whenever they want and in a manner conducive to their learning style. Tegrity may have produced its own wave of the future for teaching and learning.

By Larry R. Humes

Imagine being able to go back and experience a particular lecture all over again, in the comfort of your own home, at your convenience, as many times as you want. Sound far-fetched? The software is called Tegrity Campus, and at institutions like Coppin State University, it is changing the manner in which faculty teach and students learn.

"Tegrity is the only software that I've seen that truly is at the core of teaching and learning," says Ahmed El-Haggan, vice president of Coppin's IT Division. "It is transforming what takes place in our classrooms, and it really complements what our faculty are trying to accomplish. It's an approach to learning that will catch on quickly."

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Tegrity has been around for about a decade, offering multimedia technology. A year ago, the company introduced Tegrity Campus software that integrates audio and video with both the instructor's and student's notes. Using special pens and notebooks, the web-based tool enables a student to click on a word and instantly retrieve the portion of the instructor's lecture that pertains to that subject. Among the company's 350 campus customers, about 30 are already using the new software, and more are joining their ranks as word spreads.

It shows well to audiences

When he observed a software demo at the 2004 EDUCAUSE conference, El-Haggan thought Tegrity might be the key to getting Coppin's faculty more engaged in the use of technology. Demonstrations were scheduled on campus for faculty and administrators, and the response was positive.

"When I saw how it could be used, I thought it was too good to be true," says provost Sadie Gregory. "Where was this technology when I was in school?"

Established 105 years ago and located in the city of Baltimore, Coppin is a historically black liberal arts university serving 4,000 students. El-Haggan believes Coppin's faculty took so quickly to the Tegrity software because it is intuitive and easy to use. "The software is integrated into our Blackboard system. To record a lecture, a professor simply hits the record button." As a student reviews his or her notes later, a video appears on the left side of the computer screen and the notes on the right.

Tegrity sales and marketing executive Brian Allan says that no radical changes are necessary in the way faculty teach or students take notes. "It is not uncommon to require only five minutes to get up and started. It's definitely meeting the instructors where they're at, adapting to tools they already are using."

A pilot, a poll, and a conference

Coppin conducted a pilot project during the 2005 spring semester. Ten instructors taught with the software, and 100 students were given the special pens and notebooks. At the end of the semester, 80 percent of the students said they felt the system affected their success in the course. And 90 percent of them said they

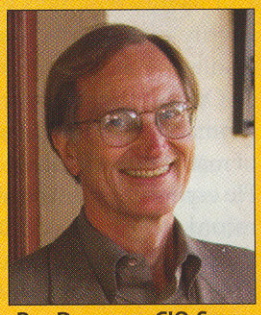
Are learning outcomes enhanced?

Tegrity Campus apparently is well liked by the majority of students and faculty who have used it in the classroom. But does it enhance learning outcomes? Two schools currently testing the software hope to find out.

Santa Clara University purchased 150 pens last spring and ran a pilot project in five classes during the spring and two more classes during the summer. This fall, they are using the software in four classes: art history, biology, political science and religious studies.

"Students find greater value in what I would call a media intensive lecture environment," says Santa Clara CIO Ron Danielson. "If an instructor is using PowerPoint and bringing web resources into a lecture and projecting it in front of the class as well as writing on the board, students seem to see greater value in the experience. If an instructor is simply writing on a whiteboard or lecturing, students don't see as much value."

Danielson says they plan to offer some of the courses taught this semester with Tegrity again during winter term without it. "We're trying to determine if the software has any impact on student learning. We will try to keep course content and everything else as similar as possible. We will interview students and do whatever comparisons we can to determine the system's effectiveness."



RON DANIELSON, CIO, SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

Most of Santa Clara's MBA students work in nearby Silicon Valley, says Danielson. Even without the pens and connected note-taking, the software has its benefits, he notes. "One student told me that while on a business trip, he missed a class, downloaded the classroom lecture from the Tegrity server, and watched it during the plane ride home. He was right up to speed when he went to the class on Thursday night."

An art history teacher at Santa Clara was named chair of her department about the time the Tegrity pilot began. She felt the only way she could continue teaching art history was for the students to do more of the work. As Danielson tells it, "She re-structured the course around student Power Point presentations to be given in class. Each of the student presentations was also loaded on the Tegrity server. She told me that the knowledge that this material would be on the server and viewed by fellow students repeatedly, caused the quality of the presentations to be dramatically better than she's ever seen before. She also reported that students believed the software improved their learning experience." He sums up their experience so far, "Intuitively and anecdotally it looks great. We're just trying to put some empirical evidence behind our intuition."

Sally Standiford, executive vice president and chief academic officer at Minnesota State College, Southeast Technical, says some of the faculty requested an IT mini-grant to conduct a three-year pilot test of Tegrity's software from the school's student-controlled technology committee.

"I'm very supportive of ways to use technology to get students to think differently about their subject area," says Standiford, who earned her doctorate in instructional applications and computers. "You have to teach them how to use the technology to learn, but you don't necessarily have to make technology the focus of the instruction. That's sometimes a hard corner to turn."

A third of Southeast Technical's 75 faculty members are involved in the pilot, with 100 students in 33 classes, says Standiford. Most of the usage involves the school's nursing programs, involving many employed adult students and clinical trainees.

Describing the software as intuitive and easy to use, Standiford says her institution has had no problems with implementation or use of Tegrity, except for the occasional malfunctioning microphone cable. She says she has not noticed any changes in instructional style among faculty using the learning system.

Like her counterparts at Santa Clara University, Standiford says her college will teach the same courses with and without Tegrity and try to measure any differences. "I'm not sure that we're going to determine if it's 'better' or just 'different from.' If we can get at the nature of the 'difference from,' then it might be worthwhile to pursue further study."

wanted Tegrity available in some or all of their other courses.

"Soon afterward we had a faculty conference to discuss technology in the delivery of instruction," says Gregory. "I was amazed at the attendance. We had close to a hundred percent participation of faculty. We had vendors there like Gateway, Nortel and Tegrity. We had English and math teachers giving the presentations, not computer scientists. Our faculty members who had used Tegrity in the pilot presented their results to their colleagues."

One faculty pilot participant was Emmanuel Anoruo, associate professor of management science and economics. He especially likes the ability to pre-record some of his lectures at home so his students can view them whenever they have convenient access to the internet.

"Recording myself gives me an opportunity to view areas where I may need to improve my teaching skills. Also, when a student says a professor didn't say something in class, we now have proof," Anoruo says with a laugh.

More faculty come aboard

Gregory says 30 more professors signed up to use the software in their courses. "I also gave 10 mini-grants to professors interested in developing online courses during the summer using Tegrity. Those instructors came almost every day to the workshops. Some faculty who did not get the grants came to the workshops anyway — during the summer and on their own time. They said they really wanted to learn more about Tegrity. And so, I looked at Dr. El-Haggan and said: 'I thought you told me this was a faculty that didn't want to use technology?'"

According to El-Haggan, many of the online courses developed during the summer are available this semester. The number of students enrolled in them has exceeded expectations. He says about 35 faculty members are using the software in their courses. When the 800 students in those courses were asked to buy the special pens and notebooks —at about $90 — they all purchased.

"Recording myself gives me an opportunity to view areas where I may need to improve my teaching skills. Also, when a student says a professor didn't say something in class, we now have proof,"

Emmanuel Anoruo, associate professor, Coppin State University

Meanwhile, if they make use of the pens in their courses; provide some of their notes as training examples; and complete a survey at the end of the semester, El-Haggan says the university will refund them the cost of the materials.

Sadie Gregory relates a telling tale. "Just before the fall semester, Dr. El-Haggan came to me and told me that two of our nursing classes are demanding to use Tegrity in their classrooms and we need to order more of those pens. It's an incredible learning tool. And I've not had to mandate it to the faculty or students. It's being driven by demand. As a matter of fact, I'm looking at my budget to see if I can keep up with this demand. It is transforming the classroom experience here at Coppin at a rate that has exceeded my expectations."

Adult learners and staff users

A metropolitan university, Coppin also has a sizeable population of students with jobs and families. "With this software, they can come to class after work. At home, if they want to log on at one in the morning, they can review and use this wonderful study tool at any time and from anyplace. It's a learning tool that offers flexibility which really benefits non-traditional students."

Since the lectures can be recorded, one might assume the system would encourage students to skip class altogether and review the lectures at their leisure. Early indications are that the opposite occurs, however. El-Haggan says Tegrity has been helpful in training staff who use the university's PeopleSoft ERP system. With recorded instructional segments explaining various administrative functions, Tegrity has become a useful help desk tool that users can refer to on demand.

El-Haggan says Tegrity requires modest storage space on the university's servers. He estimates that if all faculty members used it in every course to its fullest capacity (audio, video and note-taking), it would require less than half a terabyte. He acknowledges that other companies offer similar recording software. However, his peers at other schools reported more complicated implementations. "For example, one of my peers who is using another system said six weeks of implementation were required to record just one course. It took us just one night to load the entire Tegrity system. And Tegrity has been good about providing patches and upgrades and support when we need it."

Achievement database

Tegrity's Allan says they are working on enhancing the product's governance and program assessment capabilities. An "achievement database" will integrate Tegrity's operational data with data from other campus systems. "We'd like to help answer certain questions," Allan remarks. "How well is your program doing? Is it meeting your goals and objectives?" Meanwhile, any professor can monitor what the students are reviewing.

"Nationwide there is a concern about retention, particularly among freshmen," says Gregory. "I think that this software will help us improve retention; reduce the time to degree; and improve our graduation rate." ■

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