

Training Ground for the Next Generation of Broadcasters

Globecomm Creates Media Studios for the University of Massachusetts

The University of Massachusetts is the state's education giant, with nearly 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at its Amherst campus. UMass, as it is known, is a nationally ranked research university that scores in the top 30 among the nation's 600 public universities ranked by *U.S. News and World Report*.

The university's rich offerings include Departments of Communications and Journalism. These disciplines are being challenged in the marketplace by breakneck change in how content is developed, distributed, accessed and consumed. To prepare for future careers, students need to master a broad range of technologies and the digital skills needed to turn them into stories.



UMass chose to tackle that challenge by constructing two new studios for Communications and Journalism students. The goal was to give students experience with the full capabilities of real-world TV studios, where they could build expertise that would translate directly into the workplace. As systems integrator, the university chose Globecomm.

Communications Studio

Because the aims of the two departments are different, Globecomm implemented a different mix of technology for their students. The production control room in the Communications studio was equipped with a Grass Valley 2M/E Vision Mixer, ChyronHego 2D/3D Character Generators, teleprompters and Clearcom IFB/PL intercom. Also included were control consoles, video walls, tally system, multi-image video processors, a Image47 LED lighting system, DMX control dimmers, green and white cyclorama on rails, and Miranda's NVision 96x96 routing system.

Technical consoles were arranged in parallel, as in a professional control room, with workstation positions for art director, technical director, producer, graphics operator, production assistant and teleprompter operator. Teachers usually occupy the art or technical director positions.



The studio itself was equipped with three CMOS HD cameras from Grass Valley. An accompanying audio control room featured a digital audio mixer with a 48-fader console for audio mixing and sound capture.

News Studio

The second studio, for journalism students, had the same basic architecture: three-camera studio, production control room and audio control room. But its design reflected the unique demands of news workflow, beginning with a newsroom computer system (NRCS). The NRCS included a story-writing application available at 16 editorial workstations for students acting as news segment producers and a fully functioning news assignment desk with script override for teachers acting as chief editors. The system automatically updates the teleprompter system as edits are made to stories.

Each workstation has access to Production Asset Management (PAM) systems capable of receiving wire stories and generating rough edit decision list (EDL) markings. Full-featured craft editing is available on Apple iMac workstations. Archiving is provided by Xendata's Archive Management System for long-term storage.

The Journalism Studio is located on the third floor of the building, with the campus grounds as background for a two-person anchor desk. The Communications Studio is on same floor but its design provides full acoustic wall enclosure for sound isolation.



The other unique feature of the Journalism studio is a separate FM radio booth furnished with 16-Fader IP audio control console by Axia, Panasonic PTZ Camera,

Shure on-air boom microphones, Tascam audio CD recorders/players and SSD handheld recorders/players, live-streaming podCast encoders and a radio on-air management application.

Leveraging Common Assets

Though the two studios were designed for different uses, Globecomm sought cost-efficiencies by sharing resources wherever possible. Switchers, cameras and auxiliary subsystems were interconnected, so that the studios could be configured to run two mix effects (2M/E) on each switcher panel or combine all available M/Es on a single switcher control surface. The cameras were connected to Camera Control Unit base stations assignable to any studio of choice. Implementation included installation of four tactical wall boxes on each studio floor complete with interconnection to equipment cabinets and the PCR control console. Two post-production finishing systems linked with eight non-linear edit suites on 4th floor as well as an interview room.

Connections also extended beyond the walls of the building where the studios are housed. Globecomm installed three external bollards at strategic locations on campus. Each provides multiple fiber runs to the control rooms and supports both audio/video feeds and intercom from these external sites for coverage of special events on campus.

The new studios represent a significant investment in the future for UMass. Their significance is even greater for the students. These advanced studios will help aspiring broadcasters to become future leaders in the entertainment and news industries. ■



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