

TANDBERG
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PROFILE**

Georgia Institute
of Technology



- Reach across geographical boundaries
- Expand distance learning initiatives
- Provide unique services
- Maximize expertise and teaching resources

"For me, this videoconferencing has made it possible to teach across geographical boundaries never thought of before..."

DR. HAMID GARMESTANI
PROFESSOR OF MATERIALS SCIENCE &
ENGINEERING
GEORGIA TECH

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, VIDEO-COMMUNICATION PIONEER, SERVES AS GLOBAL MODEL FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

GLOBAL LEARNING CENTER, TANDBERG CONNECT ATLANTA CAMPUS TO REST OF WORLD

A DISTANCE-LEARNING PIONEER

Since 1977, when Georgia Power Co. asked educators at the Georgia Institute of Technology to develop a distance-learning program for its engineers, Georgia Tech has been at the forefront of using technology in teaching. The school initially developed a Master of Science degree in electrical engineering that Georgia Power employees could pursue via videotape. It later added master's degree programs in mechanical engineering, environmental engineering, and industrial and systems engineering.

VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM

In 1992, then-Georgia Gov. Zell Miller established what has become the largest video-communication system in the world. The Georgia Statewide Academic and Medical System (GSAMS) network transmits interactive television signals over high-speed telephone lines to create a virtual community among teachers and students as well as doctors and patients.

Among the nation's top research universities, Georgia Tech was an initial GSAMS participant and received a video-communication technology package to provide distance-learning programs in real time. It also triggered the university's move to embrace the latest communications technology to become a leader in distance learning.

Georgia Tech set up the technology equipment in a central location and, using fiber optics, began connecting classrooms with cameras, microphones and computers. The equipped instructional classrooms on campus now number 10, and there are also 27 other pre-wired multimedia instructional rooms that can be linked to video-communication equipment. A mobile system also has been developed and is rolled from location to location for remote transmission.

With the advent of visual communication and the Internet, the school's distance-

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learning program began to accelerate. Georgia Tech adds new programs on a regular basis, and this fall, undergraduate and graduate students can take any of 95 distance-learning classes that meet two or three days a week and 44 of these courses employ video communication.

TANDBERG IN THE CLASSROOM

Georgia Tech began using TANDBERG equipment in the mid-1990s when it purchased its initial TANDBERG 6000 model. That model's high-performance features, premium-quality audio and large monitors create a collaborative environment for large classroom groups. George Wright, the school's associate director for distance learning, says his 18-member staff now uses nine 6000 codecs with various configurations. "We evaluated several equipment manufacturers and felt that TANDBERG's product best met our needs and standards," says Wright. His engineer also touted TANDBERG. "He had been very familiar with the name since his early days in radio and he was comfortable with TANDBERG products," Wright recalls.

In July 2003, Georgia Tech's new \$180 million Global Learning and Conference Center opened with its \$9 million in technology. It houses the school's Distance Learning and Education Program. With its advanced technology, the wireless facility quickly has become the nerve center for all distance-learning activities. In an executive videoconference suite in the conference center, a TANDBERG 880 links hotel or conference guests with their offices, providing a true business-conference application. The 880 incorporates the features and functions of larger systems in a portable, high-performance set-top box. Recently, a Canadian bank executive attending a Georgia Tech conference used the system to participate in an important meeting back at his Toronto headquarters.

PROFESSORS AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Since the distance-learning classes are voluntary for professors, Wright's staff members make it as painless for the instructors as possible. The distance-learning support staff takes charge of the presentation arrangements and monitoring so that professors can simply do their thing: teach. "We try to make the technology disappear into the woodwork."

With a campus in France and an affiliation with Singapore's national university, Georgia Tech professors do a great deal of video communication between the schools. Professors also use the visual-communication systems to connect with sites across the U.S. and abroad for unique applications. Architecture Prof. Rama Sivakumar, for instance, links with the MidAmerica Earthquake Center each month.

William Koros, a professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, uses video communication to collaborate with colleagues in several other U.S. universities on a National Science Foundation project. And over the past several years, nearly every U.S. astronaut being trained has used the video technology in distance-learning classes.

Prof. Steve Usselman has team taught with Stanford Prof. Tim Lenoir for their course, "History of Science and High Technology in Silicon Valley, East vs. West." And Prof. Frank Clark, a music professor, connects with a counterpart in Norway to critique student orchestra conductors' performances. Says Dr. Hamid Garmestani, professor of materials science and engineering: "For me, this videoconferencing has made it possible to teach across geographical boundaries never thought of before. My most successful videoconferencing was when I taught from Korea. Students on this side of the globe could not believe that I was teaching from Korea and thought it was a joke."

Aided by TANDBERG equipment, Wright and his distance-learning staff also help on some unusual projects. Using video, students have defended their doctoral dissertations when a member or members of their faculty dissertation-defense panels

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are teaching overseas. A faculty member interviewed for a summer sabbatical at England's Imperial College, and a Georgia Tech student who was a candidate for Eagle Scout used video communication to link with instructors in upstate New York to wrap up his Eagle Scout work.

GEORGIA TECH AND THE FUTURE

The university and its teachers have further plans for expanding its distance-learning initiatives through the use of video. They intend with video to connect with the experts that their research and teaching requires. They already are considering offering a textiles and polymer program to other schools, and they also expect to expand the collaborative and cooperative teaching arrangements among various universities. In addition, the number of classes taught by video continues to grow.

Georgia Tech will almost certainly continue to pave the way in distance learning and visual communication in the future. As Wright explains, "When you work at a science and technology university, faculty members are always pushing the envelope."

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