

University of Texas-Pan American

Edinburg, Texas

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As the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) approaches the fourth phase of its Classroom Technology Initiative, Omar Cantu, director of video services is proud of what the university has accomplished and excited about what the future of technology has in store for this growing campus.

The Classroom Technology Initiative (CTI) was established in direct response to professor feedback calling for more classrooms to be fully equipped with high quality, easy-to-operate AV and presentation systems. The campus-wide initiative began moving forward in 2004 with UTPA choosing to standardize on Crestron managed AV solutions.

Cantu and his team have equipped over 120 of 160 total classrooms and are working on the next phase of this campus-wide initiative which will upgrade more than a dozen additional classrooms to the Crestron-standardized design.

Cantu explains, "In response to faculty feedback, our new president, Dr. Blandina Cardenas set aside the necessary funds to begin increasing the number of classrooms with AV systems to 100 percent. However, the original design called for AV projectors on carts to be wheeled from room to room. We knew it was possible to create a much more effective and reliable system by standardizing on a Crestron controlled AV system replicated in each classroom."

The original design recommended by Cantu and his team called for classrooms with a Crestron QM-MD5X1 QuickMedia Distribution Center and a QM-RMCRX Media Controller with Crestron QuickMedia® connectivity. All newly equipped classrooms are connected to their department's AV Support Services Shop via Crestron RoomView®, which enables technical support personnel to conveniently troubleshoot, control and maintain all devices remotely.

In the most recent installation of 35 classroom systems, the original design was upgraded to utilize the new MPS-100, which combines the switcher, control system and more into one complete integrated package. "The MPS-100 helped streamline both the installation and the ongoing maintenance in several dozen integrated multimedia systems installed in classrooms throughout campus," noted Cantu.



The MPS-100 smartly integrates the control system, switcher, audio control and amplifier into one rackmountable package which resides in the instructor's desk, eliminating the need for separate components. This improved and simplified the previous configuration, which placed the media switcher in the equipment rack and the media processor in the high ceilings above the projectors. In addition to consolidating multiple components, MPS-100 provided the flexibility UTPA wanted in a classroom environment, permitting convenient modifications and servicing and also eliminating need for additional power outlets.

In classrooms requiring fewer media devices, Crestron IM-RXV1 iMedia receiver and iMedia Wall Plate Computer and Video Center were installed, keeping costs down for less demanding rooms while maintaining complete RoomView connectivity and valuable remote monitoring capabilities. For UTPA, a state university that must procure the absolute most from a finite budget, this was a perfect solution.

"The project has been an overwhelming success," Cantu proudly says. "When we began this initiative, only about 40 of our nearly 160 classrooms were fully equipped with end-to-end AV solutions. However, none of those classrooms were standardized on a single solution so, you had literally dozens of operating instructions floating around for the various systems on campus. A few were outfitted with AMX, Extron and Crestron, but mostly they were just legacy component remotes. For someone who spent all of their time teaching in one classroom to go to another classroom – they would find an entirely different setup."



RoomView and QuickMedia are used in each room to interconnect, troubleshoot, control and maintain all computers, monitors and projectors – all over Cat5e cabling - significantly reducing expensive wiring requirements. If a component is removed from the room or its connection interrupted for any reason, RoomView immediately sends an email alert to the classroom support technician and campus police so an officer can be dispatched to the location and confirm that a theft is not in progress.

“Crestron has been very supportive of us throughout the entire process and now that every unequipped classroom has been outfitted with a Crestron solution, we’ve begun upgrading all the “old-style” systems. We knew we made the right choice when we got responses back from a faculty survey and many of them were very satisfied that every classroom was equipped with a modern, easy-to-use and reliable media presentation system. One professor recently said, ‘The use of the integrated control has made it much easier to operate.’”

To date, Cantu and his team have equipped over 120 of 160 total classrooms and are working on the next phase of this campus-wide initiative which will upgrade more than a dozen additional classrooms to the Crestron-standardized design.