



Idaho State University Opens State-of-the-Art Laboratory Complex with Sharp Displays

Without a formal gross anatomy laboratory, Idaho State University-Meridian (ISU-Meridian) students relied on video conferencing in the main Pocatello campus for the interactive portion of their studies. Complementing a newly constructed laboratory facility with more than 40 Sharp display systems, ISU-Meridian has advanced health sciences studies across campus and established a hands-on, interactive learning environment.

Business Environment Challenges

As the state's premier institution for health sciences education, ISU enrolls more than 14,000 students at four campus locations, including the Meridian Health Science Center in Meridian, ID. Without a laboratory on campus, ISU-Meridian students were unable to gain hands-on experience in a wet laboratory. To ensure equitable learning across all campuses, lab work had to be eliminated from all ISU student curricula, despite the fact that the main Pocatello campus had an available anatomy laboratory. In order to provide ISU students with the valuable hands-on experience demanded by their studies, particularly those in the Physician Assistant program, administrators felt that the construction of a laboratory was imperative.

“For the Meridian campus to grow and ensure that our students have access to the educational tools they need to succeed, not only Physician Assistant students but those in other branches of health sciences as well, we needed to expand the campus to include a gross anatomy lab,” says Brian Atkinson, Instructional Technologist, ISU-Meridian. “We wanted the labs to support only the most innovative and advanced technologies so that the facilities would truly be state of the art.”

Industry

Education

Organization

Idaho State University

Integrator

Avidex

Challenges

- Lack of laboratory facilities for health sciences students
- Limited interactive and hands-on learning
- Heavy reliance on video conferencing and distance learning for critical studies

Solutions

- 2 PN-L802B 80" Class (diagonal) interactive display systems
- 1 PN-L703B 70" Class (69.5" diagonal) interactive display system
- 21 PN-U553 55" Class (54.7" diagonal) professional displays
- 13 PN-R703 70" Class (69.5" diagonal) professional displays
- 4 PN-E802 80" Class (diagonal) professional displays
- 2 PN-K321 32" Class (diagonal) professional displays

Results

- Advanced visual learning capabilities
- More efficient use of laboratory and educator time
- Collaborative and simultaneous observation of laboratory work
- Enhanced hands-on experiment opportunities
- Cross-classroom and cross-campus learning capabilities
- Easy-to-use connectivity for educators

Atkinson and his team researched various laboratories as part of the design phase and determined that a number of large, high-definition display screens would be a primary component. Strategically placed throughout the new laboratories, the interconnected displays would provide students with advanced visual capabilities and enable more collaborative learning for large groups of students.



Technology Solutions

At the recommendation of audio-video integrator Avidex, with whom ISU-Meridian has partnered for other audio/visual needs on campus, Sharp was selected as the visual hardware provider for the new facilities. Sharp offered the necessary image quality and the broadest selection of displays to outfit the labs under one manufacturer. ISU-Meridian now has a combination of more than 40 Sharp display systems ranging in size from 32" to 80" Class (diagonal), including three Sharp AQUOS BOARD® interactive display systems for hands-on interaction. The displays are dispersed throughout the new laboratory complex that ISU-Meridian constructed: Gross Anatomy Lab, BioSkill Learning Center, Virtual Anatomy Lab and Anatomy Learning Lab/Studio.



Proven Results

The ISU-Meridian laboratories far surpassed the initial goal of providing hands-on experience to students, and now offer one of the best laboratory learning settings in the country. With large 55" Class (54.7" diagonal) Sharp displays located at each workstation, coupled with adjustable high-definition cameras, students can easily view learning activities taking place anywhere in the laboratory. With a click of a button, instructors can project the work from a single station to all display screens, allowing an entire class to participate.

Increased Student Collaboration

Typically, students would need to take turns gathering around a workstation with limited viewing. The Sharp displays allow class members to participate instantaneously with a high-resolution image that the eye would not permit within a typical lab environment. A number of screens are also mounted throughout the lab for educator projection of learning materials, or collaborative video conferencing with other classrooms, campuses, or healthcare facilities.

"We felt that students should always have unlimited access to high-quality, high-definition images, particularly in programs of study that pertain to the health sciences," adds Atkinson. "The phrase that kept coming up in design discussions was the need to achieve a 'gold standard' for the new facilities. We wanted to ensure that the labs would be useful and provide countless collaborative learning opportunities that would otherwise not be possible."

Joint Learning Opportunities

Built in a former warehouse that was purchased in partnership with the local West ADA school district, the labs present joint learning opportunities with Renaissance High School students. Many graduates concurrently earn an associate degree by participating in courses offered through ISU-Meridian at the lab facilities. The innovative design of the labs also lends itself to professional education beyond the university level. Physicians can visit the labs to further their professional development, enabling students to also engage with professionals in their field and gain real-life laboratory experience.

"The quality of Sharp technologies was among the highest that we observed and a significant determinant of our selection for the facilities' display technology," continues Atkinson. "The new labs have completely changed how we educate students here at ISU-Meridian, enabling an unmatched level of education and hands-on critical learning experience. ISU-Meridian, with the help of Sharp technologies, now provides one of the best health sciences learning environments in the country."

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