SUMMARY

BACKGROUND:
Dakota State University (DSU) is a four-year public state university with 2,300 full-time students. DSU specializes in computer management, computer information systems and other related programs. The University is designated as a center for excellence in information technology for the state of South Dakota.

CHALLENGE:
DSU needed to upgrade classroom technology in order to maintain its distinction as the information technology leader among higher education institutions. Professors had to be excited about the new technology, as they would be responsible for integrating it into the classrooms and labs. The technology had to offer significant value to the families of DSU students who would be required to lease the new Tablet PCs as part of DSU’s mandate program.

GATEWAY SOLUTION:
Gateway notebooks distinguish DSU as a technology leader and give faculty and students important tools to advance IT knowledge and streamline working styles.
- 110 Tablet PCs assigned to faculty and staff facilitate curriculum integration and faculty productivity.
- 850 Gateway M275 Notebook-to-Tablet PCs with Intel Centrino Mobile Technology allow freshmen, sophomores, and upper class students who opted into the program to have the option of handwriting or typing.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT:
DSU credits the advanced technology of Gateway M275s, with helping to keep the University in its distinct position as an information technology leader. With M275s, the classroom environment is more interactive, and paper use is significantly reduced.

“...To live up to the designation of Information Technology Excellence Center, DSU must push the limits of technology integration into the classroom and overall educational lives of students and faculty. Broad implementation of Gateway’s Tablet PCs does just that.”
— David Zolnowsky, Chief Information Officer, Dakota State University

Leading With Technology

Gateway helps Dakota State University
KEEP AHEAD OF THE TECHNOLOGY CURVE

BACKGROUND
Founded in 1881, Dakota State University (DSU) is a four-year public state university with 2,300 full-time students. DSU is designated as the Information Technology Excellence Center for the state of South Dakota. All of DSU’s degree programs require two three-hour courses in computing, a computer concepts course, and a programming course. More importantly, computer integration is emphasized throughout the entire curriculum regardless of major.

DSU is an institution specializing in programs in computer management, computer information systems, and other related undergraduate and graduate programs. A special emphasis is the preparation of elementary and secondary teachers with expertise in the use of computer technology and information processing in the teaching and learning process.

EDUCATION CHALLENGE
DSU has been ahead of the technology curve with its computing infrastructure since the mid-1980s when South Dakota mandated that all K through 12 and public higher education institutions be fully wired. The School strives to maintain its distinction through advanced technology course requirements and in
the technology tools provided for students and faculty. DSU is focused on continually migrating to advance technology which has included moving from main frames to networks and from wired infrastructure to wireless networks.

DSU began looking for the next level of advanced technology to integrate into its educational environment. David Zolnowsky, Chief Information Officer at Dakota State University, and Tom Farrell, Senior Faculty Member at Dakota State University, as well as others, evaluated potential new technology and looked at how they might incorporate client systems in new ways throughout the school.

“We knew there would be problems with the progressive move to deploy M275s for freshman and sophomore students at DSU. Gateway participated in solving every issue, no matter how small. They recognize the value of our program at DSU and how we can help each other.”

— David Zolnowsky, Chief Information Officer, Dakota State University

GATEWAY SOLUTION

DSU believed that successful incorporation of new technology into the learning environment was largely dependent on the degree to which professors use the new tools. DSU gave various notebook PC models to faculty to evaluate and use as their primary PCs. The Gateway Tablet PC was selected for the processing power and flexibility that gives it enormous potential as an instructional tool. In spring 2003, DSU launched a pilot program by ordering 130 Gateway Motion-Slate Tablet PCs for full-time use by faculty and part-time use by some students. All DSU groups using Gateway Tablet PCs recognized its potential. Some professors who were initially reluctant to give up their desktop systems became leading proponents of the Tablet PCs, especially for the flexibility the M275s offered during lectures. “The Tablet function allows students to see instructors’ handwritten notes that emphasize key points in the material,” reports Farrell. DSU professors also used Tablet PCs with wireless remote projection allowing them to move about the classroom as they lecture, completely untethered. This freedom allowed instructors to offer additional hands-on assistance in classes that combined lecture and lab.

Following the pilot program, DSU ordered 850 Gateway M275 Notebook-to-Tablet PCs for use by full-time freshman and sophomore students as part of the mandate program effective fall 2004. The mandate program requires that eligible students lease M275s from the school. Zolnowsky reported that parents of eligible students were relieved that the PC decision had not only been made for them, but that the M275s and support for the units were part of the financial aid package. “I think parents were pleased that sending their student to DSU would not necessitate a trip to the computer store, because a computer had been chosen for all students and faculty,” said Farrell.

As anticipated, Gateway supported DSU from the time the M275s arrived one week early, throughout training, and by helping to establish support desks, operated by DSU students. “We knew there would be problems with the progressive move to deploy M275s for freshmen and sophomores at DSU. Gateway participated in solving every issue, no matter how small. They recognize the value of our program at DSU and how we can help each other,” stated Zolnowsky.

After two semesters of using Gateway M275s, DSU is enthusiastic about the impact the Tablet PCs are having in the classroom. With M275s, professors are turning the traditional one-to-many format of lectures into an interactive experience that promotes faculty student interaction as well as information sharing. The flexibility of the M275s allows professors to keep students’ work saved on their Tablet PCs, ready for correcting anytime by hand or typed text insertion. Faculty and students increasingly appreciate the ease of this paperless exchange. The Introduction to Computers course, with over 300 students, was conducted entirely without printing to paper for the first time ever. “Gateway M275s allowed all tests and labs to be submitted, corrected, returned, and recorded without printing one piece of paper, for an entire course,” reports Farrell. “Gateway is helping DSU model the advantages of technology-based solutions and allowing our students to participate in them.”

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

By selecting Gateway M275s for its mandate program, DSU exceeded the objectives initially established. Today the advanced capabilities of M275s used by professors and mandated for first and second year students, keeps DSU at the forefront of higher education institutions. The same M275s provide the processing power and flexibility required in the technology courses where students experience the IS or IT work environment first hand. An unexpected benefit of the Gateway M275 implementation is the ability to conduct a class of over 300 students without using a single piece of paper.

“To live up to the designation of Information Technology Excellence Center, DSU must push the limits of technology integration into the classroom and overall educational lives of students and faculty. Broad implementation of Gateway’s Tablet PCs does just that,” concluded Zolnowsky.

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