

Haverford College

Increasing accessibility and supporting universal design for learning with Panopto

In 2011, a Chemistry professor asked Instructional Technology Services to help her find a solution to record lectures. She wanted students to be able to review lectures and slides after class, and wanted the recordings to be easy-to-find. Instructional Technology Services at Haverford reviewed several technology platforms to record and manage lecture capture recordings, and finally chose Panopto.

The Panopto implementation was seamless, according to Sharon Strauss, who works as an Instructional Technology Specialist at Haverford College, and was part of Instructional Technology Services at the time. "I clearly remember the Panopto implementation because it was so uneventful. All we did was connect Panopto to our LMS -- Moodle -- and then we told everyone about it. Easy. The hardest part was training everyone on how to use it since it was a completely new technology."

In the early days, STEM classes used Panopto most actively. Over time, however, other professors started experimenting with flipped video content. The Japanese and Music departments, for example, began using Panopto to capture student presentations and performances.

Students liked the ability to go back and review materials, particularly in preparation for final exams, explained Alexander Savoth, who is also an Instructional Technology Specialist and a colleague of Strauss. "Lots of students told us how useful Panopto was for them when studying for finals. Sometimes students would realize at the end of the semester that they didn't fully understand a concept that was introduced earlier in the class, so being able to quickly find that exact moment and rewatch it was very helpful."

Non-native language speakers and students with disabilities or learning challenges also praised the closed captioning, variable playback, and auto-generated chapters from PowerPoint slides.

Instructional Technology Services realized how lecture capture and the creative use of video supported their mission of making teaching at Haverford accessible to all types of learners through universal design. They therefore encouraged more professors to record their lectures with Panopto, but adoption was slow.



About Haverford College

Haverford College is a leading liberal arts undergraduate college located outside Philadelphia that is known for its academic rigor, Honor Code, and beautiful arboretum campus. Consistently considered among the top academic institutions in the country, Haverford offers a rigorous academic program focused on individual growth, intellectual exploration, and pushing the boundaries of each discipline. With 1,373 students enrolled and a 9:1 student faculty ratio, most classes assume a seminar style with an emphasis on discussion and debate.

The challenge:

The pandemic changed how Haverford uses Panopto

Prior to the pandemic, Haverford professors were primarily using Panopto for traditional automated lecture capture. Students would come to class, the professor would begin teaching, and Panopto would automatically record, share, and store the lecture. When classes moved online and students and professors were all in different locations, professors needed a new recording tool -- one that could do synchronous video conferencing and record at the same time.

The selected video conferencing solution, however, had its limitations: the video editing capabilities and long-term video storage were minimal, and it wasn't the best solution for sharing class videos. With this system, the recordings weren't being saved in the correct folders in Moodle and it was difficult to find videos once they were recorded.

The solution:

Training and making more classrooms "Panopto-ready"

When it became clear to Instructional Technology Services that Haverford would be shifting to remote learning, they quickly turned their attention to training teachers and staff on how to use various technologies to keep the college running smoothly.

Through a combination of training courses and individualized help for professors, Haverford delineated best practices on how to use the video conferencing system and Panopto together for maximum effectiveness. The video conferencing system was to be used for capturing live sessions and Panopto was the software for creating and editing asynchronous video as well as storing and managing video recordings.

Much of the training for Panopto focused on how to create flipped content and how to rethink content delivered via video. Strauss and Savoth encouraged professors to create short videos (10 minutes or less), rather than recording long lectures. They stressed the importance of using online teaching pedagogical best practices -- breaking up 40-minute lectures into smaller, more digestible pieces for on-demand viewing.

Over the summer of 2020, Haverford also implemented LTI Pro (an add-on to the video conferencing system) which made it easy for professors

Panopto Usage Over Time

Semester	Panopto Hours
Fall 2015	1,162
Spring 2016	678
Fall 2016	713
Spring 2017	1,689
Fall 2017	659
Spring 2018	1,192
Fall 2018	1,272
Spring 2019	1,913
Fall 2019	1,585
Spring 2020 all online for ½ the semester	3,807
Fall 2020 - through 11/23 hybrid classes, some all online	8,403
Fall 2020 - through 12/31 all online	11,205
Spring 2021 hybrid classes, some all online	9,666
Total Hours	43,944

to record their live lectures in the system and then have them automatically appear in Panopto and available to students in the correct class folder.

Strauss explained: "Having all those video conferencing system cloud recordings automatically going to Panopto has been super helpful for us. The permissioning is so flexible and easy to use. Professors can decide if they want the recordings to go directly to their class folder or to their own private folders."

Once live recordings were available in Panopto, professors could easily edit them, "You can do more editing in Panopto than you can with the video conferencing system," said Strauss. "With the video conferencing system, you can only clip the ends. But with Panopto you can make cuts in the middle and that's really helpful if people just want to share part of a meeting."

Prior to the pandemic, Haverford only had six classrooms configured to support video recording. When the college decided to use a hybrid model of teaching in the fall of 2020, they made 22 classrooms video conference and Panopto-ready, with high-quality cameras and microphone systems.

The combination of the shift to virtual and hybrid learning, combined with investments in training and technology, caused Panopto usage to increase substantially during the pandemic.

The results:

What began as a solution for a specific use case became an integral part of learning and accessibility at Haverford

When Haverford College picked Panopto in 2011, they were primarily interested in lecture capture. Strauss explained that at that time, they never could have imagined the central role Panopto would play: "Today, we use Panopto a lot. In addition to lecture capture, we use it to store video conference recordings and other video content that people need to stream, especially videos that faculty create and need to share with their classes. These features have been especially useful during the pandemic."

Savoth said moving forward, when students are in-person and there is no longer a need for video conferencing, he will encourage faculty to use Panopto instead of the video conferencing system for recording video: "Panopto is the main place where we store and deliver video, so it makes sense to use Panopto to record. But also Panopto is also just really intuitive. It is easy to make a recording, share your screen, and make edits."

With 22 classrooms now equipped with recording technology and a higher level of comfort with Panopto by students and faculty alike, Savoth predicts there will be more video presentations and group video projects in the future. "Post pandemic, when you don't have to initiate a video conference and you can easily pick one of the many Panopto-ready classrooms, I think we are going to see people using Panopto in new and creative ways. I am excited to see how more people harness the full capabilities of Panopto in the coming years."

Both Strauss and Savoth agree that many students and faculty are eager for in-person learning, but they believe Panopto has an important role



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— **Alexander Savoth**, *Instructional Technology Specialist*,
Haverford College

to play at Haverford in the long-term as a technology that improves accessibility and fosters creativity. During the pandemic, professors experienced the benefits of video as a powerful learning tool. Students came to rely on the videos as rich study aids, and those with learning disabilities benefited even more from accessibility-friendly features. While the “new normal” may be difficult to predict for many, at Haverford, the future is not only clear, but also replete with opportunity as students and faculty increasingly turn to Panopto for ever-better learning experiences.

A competitive review:

After about five years as a Panopto customer, the Instructional Technology Services team reevaluated the Panopto solution and compared it against competitive offerings. In that review, key features such as the auto-generated outlines from PowerPoint slides (Smart Chapters), captioning, permissioning, and editing capabilities, really stood out.

Strauss mentioned that in comparison to the competition, Panopto makes it much easier to share videos with the correct people. “What I liked a lot about Panopto is the privileging. It is much more extensive than many of the competitors’ solutions in terms of allowing privileges for just the class and making it easy for the student to access the recording. Many competitive solutions make you manually add the students or use the unlisted with a link type of privileging, which is not quite as private. It’s great to be able to have that extra layer of privileging without that extra layer of work.”