Dropbox for Education

Cleveland Community College Customer Spotlight

Dropbox for Education helps the North Carolina college sharpen its focus on teaching by enabling staff to work across devices, saving time on IT and administrative tasks.

"From an IT standpoint, if a person loses their files, we have to get involved to restore that file back to its original state. We also have to support a server that's totally dedicated to backup. Once we move everything to Dropbox, we won't have to do that. I see that as a tremendous time savings for us."

Howard Roberts, *Chief Information Officer, Cleveland Community College*

Key Results

♥ Rapid adoption as staff was already on Dropbox

⚙ Reliable access to needed materials across devices

🔒 Improved backup and recovery of files

THE CHALLENGE

Seeking a better way to share and access files

To prepare its 13,000-plus degree and continuing-ed students for the future, Cleveland Community College has always embraced the latest technology. The Shelby, North Carolina school recently received the largest federal grant for tech ever awarded to a community college in the state. Most of the tech-friendly school's faculty and staff use multiple devices, including iPads and Surface tablets, to teach at all the locations where the college offers courses.

But working across devices and platforms often made it tricky for faculty and staff to access and share files. What's more, the school's legacy server system required employees to manually back up files, a process that frequently led to accidentally deleted files — and headaches for IT. Many employees were already using personal Dropbox accounts to get around these challenges, prompting the school to consider an enterprise file sync and share solution that the entire campus could adopt.

After looking at several different vendors, the college decided to go with Dropbox for Education. "The bar had been set pretty high in terms of features, like being able to collaborate, share, access from multiple locations, those types of things," says Athena Smith, the college's Instructional Development Coordinator. "It was difficult to find something that could even come close to that."

Making it easier to teach on campus and off

With Dropbox for Education, the school is able to better serve its student community. Faculty members can now show up with their preferred devices at high schools and other off-campus class locations, and instantly access the materials they need. "The faculty member won't have to worry about what device that file is on any longer," says Smith, "Because it'll be on all their devices. They can access it from anywhere — on campus, off campus, at the beach, wherever they happen to be."

Faculty members are going paperless by sharing folders with students, which in turn is making coursework much easier to assign and collect. And the Dropbox badge is smoothing collaboration for staff working on task forces and other school planning initiatives. The feature lets viewers share files and update to the latest version when someone else makes changes, all within Microsoft Office. "In higher education, there's always a team of folks working on something," says Dr. Shannon Kennedy, Executive Vice President of Instruction and Student Development. "So this is a great benefit when you have multiple people working on the same document."

Howard Roberts, the college's Chief Information Officer, says that Dropbox for Education also provides the security features the college requires. The service integrates with the college's single sign-on provider SecureAuth, which means faculty and staff can sign into Dropbox with their school-provisioned credentials. "No one else other than the intended person is able to get access to a document from a security standpoint," he says.

Saving time for IT and teachers

Dropbox for Education will reduce the hours that IT personnel spend dealing with issues related to the sharing and backup of files, the school says. Faculty and staff will soon be backing up all files on Dropbox for Education rather than the school's legacy server, a move that will make it easier to recover files when someone accidentally deletes them — or leaves the school. "I see that as a tremendous time savings for us," says Roberts.

Bottom line? Educators are able to spend more time teaching and less time dealing with administrative tasks. "I know one faculty member that had the students create a folder and share it with them," Smith says. "They could actually walk around the classroom and look in that student's folder and say, 'Oh, yes, I got your homework,' and check that off as they walked around the classroom."

Use case	How Dropbox for Education helps
Collaboration	Staff uses the Dropbox badge to collaborate on task forces and other initiatives, avoiding version control issues.
Mobility	Teachers access teaching materials from anywhere on any device, making it easy to lead courses in the college's many off-campus locations.
Backup	IT is transitioning all backup to the cloud, making it easier to recover files that are accidentally deleted or belonging to ex-employees.

Athena Smith
Instructional Development Coordinator
Cleveland Community College

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