Innovative furniture allows for multiuse classroom

Computer Comforts creates space for lectures, hands-on training and collaboration

When Santa Clara University needed one room to accommodate many uses, it turned to a familiar partner, Computer Comforts. The company, which has worked with the California institution for 15 years, built customized furniture to create a functional, flexible space.

"The room is beautiful and comfortable, and people really like being there," says Nancy Cutler, deputy CIO for academic technology. "We're very limited on space on campus, and we have few classrooms with computers, so we needed this to be flexible. It is used for faculty workshops and events, as well as for training or instruction that requires faculty, staff or students to be at computers."

Individual and collaborative work

Learning Commons Room 203 features six workgroups—or pods—around the perimeter. Each pod seats six people; there are three Recessed Monitor tables each with two recessed monitor platforms holding a large 27" all-in-one computer. The displays are conveniently positioned slightly below eye level, allowing students to easily see over them and be seen by both faculty and fellow students. All wires are concealed within the furniture.

"We wanted to support collaborative work while allowing students to work individually, and to create a space where instructors would have a clear line of sight," Cutler says.

Rolling, Hide-Away lectern

Instructors use a movable, wheelchair-

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accessible lectern with a hideaway computer, which can cast content onto large LCD screens at the end of each pod. "This is helpful for sharing websites or material that is difficult to read in a room that size," Cutler says. "Everybody has a close-up view."

In the center of the room are four Team Tables—with no computers or displays—to allow the entire class to work together. The tables, which have tabletop power devices called Axils, can be separated for smaller groups.

Ideal for workshops and trainings

The classroom works well for activities that require collaboration with or without computers, and for faculty workshops, such as a recent one on

Integrating Technology. When the university changed vendors recently for finance and human resources, staff conducted end-user training and testing in the room. Librarians use it to teach information literacy and online research, allowing hands-on learning.

Collaboration is a theme in Santa Clara University and Computer Comforts' partnership, which has provided Hide-Away lecterns for about 120 classrooms, or about 95% of their total classrooms.

"They've been fantastic—changing the size of furniture to accommodate our needs," Cutler says. "Their flexibility and customization skills, and the ease of working with them, are why we've had this partnership for so many years."

For more information, please visit **computercomforts.com**

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