



Expanding the reach of its education program with Blackboard Collaborate

Sewanee's School of Theology | theology.sewanee.edu | Sewanee, Tennessee

“
Much of our future growth will be online. We're delighted that, with Blackboard Collaborate, our EfM learners will have as full, rich, and meaningful experience as they would if they were all together in a meeting room at church or in someone's living room.”

Elsa Bakkum

EfM Assistant Director of Training for The University of the South, School of Theology

Challenge: The University of the South looks to grow its Education for Ministry program

Through its unique Education for Ministry (EfM) four-year distance learning certificate program, The School of Theology at The University of the South educates lay people to serve a broad range of roles within the Episcopal Church.

In order to grow the program, The School recognized that it would need to offer online learning. They turned to Blackboard Collaborate to provide a platform for real-time, online learning that would be as effective and engaging as that found in face to face groups, and would enable them to expand their program's reach to remote learners, those with disabilities, and to a younger generation of digital natives.

Solution: Blackboard Collaborate with the Ultra experience

- **Accessibility to a broader audience:** Blackboard Collaborate makes learning available to anyone with an online connection, wherever they're located, whatever their learning style.
- **A learning experience every bit as rich as face-to-face:** With capabilities like an interactive whiteboard (including the ability for all session participants to write on it), application sharing, chat, show of hands, and audio and video capability, learners find that the experience is as rich and engaging as meeting in a face-to-face setting. And for those who miss a session, recordings enable them to catch up.
- **An easy to use interface:** Collaborate is a browser-based solution that provides quick and convenient access all from the browser with nothing to install. The capabilities are intuitive, so that users can focus on interaction, rather than on the underlying technology.

Results: Thanks to Blackboard Collaborate:

- EfM is now able to reach a new and growing population of learners, worldwide, including a younger generation vital to the life of the church
- Time spent recruiting group members has decreased, as online EfM groups are “recruiting themselves”
- Travel costs for mentor training sessions have decreased
- The School anticipates online EfM growth of more than 200 percent over the next 10 years, increasing the number of online groups from 30 to 100

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