

University of the State of Sonora (UES)

Overview:

- New administration aims to make UES #1 choice for all students in state of Sonora by 2020.
- By implementing itslearning, UES is able to facilitate blended learning and thus, has almost doubled enrollment.
- Centrally-designed course plans, resources and study materials now easily accessible across all campuses.

Customer:

University of the State of Sonora (UES), Mexico



2015

Year Implemented itslearning

University Profile:



5

Campuses across the state



4th

Ranking amongst all universities in Sonora*



8,000

Students prior to implementing itslearning



14,000

Students after implementing itslearning



100%

of students and teachers using itslearning

*Source: 4icu.org

UES Nearly Doubles Enrollment in 2 Years with itslearning

When the new administration of the University of the State of Sonora (UES) took over in the summer of 2015, they had a very clear goal: To make UES the higher education institution of choice for every student in the Mexican state of Sonora, bringing the total number of students up from around 8,000 to 25,000 by 2020. After analysing their needs, the team knew itslearning was crucial to making these goals a reality.

“One of the first things we did as a new administration was sit down and brainstorm everything that we needed to do in order to realise our goals,” explains Benjamin Basaldua Gomez, Chief Financial Officer at UES. “By the end of the session, we had a whiteboard full of ideas, from online e-learning solutions for students in remote areas of the state

to advanced pedagogical training for all the new lecturers we needed to employ.”

The Ideal Solution for a Variety of Needs

Following the meeting, one of Benjamin’s first tasks was to audit UES’ current IT systems from a cost/benefit perspective and analyse which systems were required to ensure UES could meet its goals. It didn’t take him long to realize that the most important tool at UES’ disposal was itslearning.

“I looked at all the ideas on the whiteboard and then looked at what itslearning could do,” he explains. “It was like, ‘Allow lecturers and students to work on any device’. Check. ‘Upload and share knowledge to all campuses’. Check. ‘Track

University of the State of Sonora, Mexico

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student progress and make reports available to everyone who needs them’. Check. Pretty soon, I realised that itslearning could help us achieve pretty much everything we wanted, from both an administrative and a pedagogical point of view.”

Reducing Costs by Consolidating IT

According to Benjamin, his audit also revealed that itslearning made perfect sense from a cost perspective. With itslearning’s capabilities, the university could phase-out many of the other IT systems it was using and do everything with itslearning. Other systems could be integrated into itslearning to ensure students, lecturers and other staff at the university need only one IT system to complete the vast majority of their tasks. This not only reduced UES’ IT costs, but also simplified work and administration.

After three years with itslearning, UES recognised the potential for even more utilisation. Benjamin notes that they weren’t using itslearning to its full capabilities. That is now beginning to change and as a result, UES can scale-up the teaching it offers – with more locations, subjects, lecturers and students – more easily than ever before.

Ensuring Quality Education at Every Location

UES has five campuses spread across the state offering 24 main study lines, ranging from traditional academic subjects to specific career-related courses. Using itslearning as a central hub for all its teaching and administration needs, it

can ensure these courses are taught to the same high level at every campus.

Security, a new course added in 2016, is a good example. Designed for security and legal personnel, such as police officers and lawyers, the course offers practical and theoretical training for people already working, as well as those looking to enter a new career. As a result, Security students are spread not just across the state, but across the whole of Mexico.

“With itslearning, we can administer all of the students from a central location as well as create and share progress reports for the entire department and individual campuses, right down to individual students. But the real benefit with itslearning, especially when launching a new course, is that it makes it so easy to share centrally-designed course plans, resources and study materials, which means we deliver the same high-quality teaching at every location. Also, as it’s online, our students and lecturers can work whenever and wherever they want, which is something they really appreciate,” says Benjamin.

Single Sign-on for Every Student and Staff Member

As UES expands, the administration team has a need to train a large number of new lecturers. With itslearning, this can be easily done with specially designed courses that cover everything from student administration to pedagogical methods, including blended learning, made available to

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lecturers through itslearning. In addition, the itslearning team has given lecturers and administrative staff a number of training sessions, including a ‘Train the Trainer’ course, which gives staff the knowledge they need to train and support other employees in how to use itslearning.

UES also takes advantage of many of the other services offered by itslearning. With the help of the itslearning team in Mexico, for example, they have integrated all of their other IT systems into itslearning, giving staff and students a single sign-on solution for all of their IT needs, from email and messaging to courses, tests and resource sharing.

“We feel that itslearning is a real ally for us,” says Benjamin. “They have a great team who go the extra mile to take care of us and our staff. We have big ambitions here, but with itslearning as a partner, we are confident we will be able to achieve them.”

Patricia González Pérez, Pedagogic Consultant at itslearning Mexico agrees. “What UES is doing with the platform is fantastic,” she says. “But they are also helping us. They are always giving us feedback and bringing new ideas to the table. Some of these we have already put into action, so hopefully itslearning users around the world will also benefit from them.”

Today, UES is teaching nearly 14,000 students across the state. They are able to offer tailored instruction that is pedagogically controlled and quality checked, individual instruction online and in the classroom, and more courses than ever before. With the help of itslearning, they are well on their way to reaching their goal of 25,000 students by 2020.