

X25 Builds Understanding of “Who We Are and How We Do Things”

Better Information Sheds Light on Future Space Needs



Inside

Appalachian State University

Boone, North Carolina

Appalachian
STATE UNIVERSITY

Products:

X25®, R25®, Schedule25®, CollegeNET® SIS-R25 Interface

Number of Students:

Over 15,000

Number of Rooms:

198 general classrooms and 153 labs/studios

Number of Classes:

More than 4,500 course sections per semester

The Motivation:

Growing awareness that effective space management is an essential element of facilitating and supporting academic programs

Why X25?

“It lets us get a handle on who we are and how we do things, and whether we want to change how we do business.”

— Art Rex, Director of Space Management & Planning

The Savings:

“X25 is saving us time in helping us design more efficiently for the future. Putting better information in the hands of decision-makers can mean dollar savings, too, in the long run.” — Art Rex

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Business Profile

Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains at the base of Howard Knob, Appalachian State University has built a solid reputation as one of the South’s top public universities. The education and training of new teachers has been a cornerstone of the university since its founding in 1899 as Watauga Academy, with the mission to prepare teachers for careers in the mountains of northwestern North Carolina.

Today, Appalachian is a member of The University of North Carolina System, with an enrollment of more than 15,000 students, a varied curriculum, and a firm commitment to a low student/faculty ratio to optimize learning.

Challenge

Recent changes in leadership at the university brought a fresh look at how university resources were being managed. The new administration felt there was room for reassessment and growth in the realm of space management. Consultants were brought in to study and evaluate Appalachian’s administrative organization.

A key recommendation of the study was the establishment of a new space management office within the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning. Art Rex was appointed Appalachian’s first Director of Space Management and Planning, with a mandate to optimize the connections between people and space. According to Rex, it was time for a thorough reexamination of space management practices to get a clear picture of current facilities, their specifications, demand and use. Some of the questions that needed to be answered were as basic as: “How do we use space? What are our current business practices? Just who are we as an academic institution and how do we do what we do?”

The goal, in a nutshell, says Rex, was “when we make decisions about space, we want to know who we are now and how we go about doing business. We need to know about the

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uniqueness of each discipline, the differences between types of spaces.” There was a clear need for a tool to help acquire and analyze this information. “We need to be thinking about what it’s going to be like in 15 years,” says Rex. It can take two or three years for new construction to be completed, and, without the right tools for prognostication, recent experience has been that “we’ve often outgrown a building by the time we move in.”



The Process

Rex is an empirical administrator who likes hard data; he likes to go into meetings with facts. The tool that offered the detailed data and analysis capabilities he needed was X25. “We have used X25 to help identify possible spaces that we can convert from classrooms or labs to offices. And it helped us see where buildings are already maximized.” A new college of education building has just been funded, and X25 is providing explicit visual images and

hard data to assist in facility planning. Using X25, staff has been able to explore questions like: “How does the college do business: How many rooms is it using and to what capacity? What types of classes are offered and when? Are classes assigned in standard meeting

patterns? How has usage been changing, and how might that impact the future?”

The knowledge planners gain from X25 helps in what Rex calls “right-sizing” space according

to who the stakeholders are and how they do business. “Sharing a simple graphic can be very, very powerful.”

The X25 Room vs Seat Utilization graph is a Rex favorite. The chart shows at a glance how often rooms are used and how well. Rex describes it as “a very simple graphic and a very valuable tool to help illustrate pictorially how well we’re doing and where we need to do better.” The graph helps him watch for the 65 percent utilization “alarm” that signals a need to make decisions about whether to build or renovate to meet the increasing demand. At Appalachian, capping enrollment is not an option.

Benefits

- Clear, persuasive graphs, ideal for business presentations, study groups, and so on
- Ability to drill down into the data, to learn more about buildings and rooms, departments, teaching resources, and so on
- Powerful support in making decisions about developing and using space
- “When you’ve got the data, it makes for a better dialog. Showing faculty and deans a graphic of how time blocks are actually used can be an eye-opening experience.”

Want to know more ?

To discuss your challenges in the areas of space planning and optimization, and how X25 can help you, contact sales@collegenet.com.

