

# case study

## Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University — Worldwide

Saba Centra-Based EagleVision Helps Embry-Riddle Worldwide Meet Lofty Educational Objectives

### Solution Overview

#### Industry — Higher Education

#### Challenge

Provide an interactive, real-time virtual learning environment that reduces travel overhead for instructors and better leverages faculty across a network of geographically distributed campuses

#### Benefits

- Enables top faculty members to instruct students at campuses nationwide
- Minimizes course cancellations due to low enrollment at worldwide campuses
- Helps Embry-Riddle meet increased enrollment objectives
- Reduces travel expense for faculty members

#### Solution

Saba Centra Suite



Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is a unique educational institution. Founded exactly 22 years after the Wright Brothers' historic flight on December 17, 1903, Embry-Riddle is widely regarded as the foremost aviation and aerospace university in the world.

Embry-Riddle teaches the science, practice, and business of aviation and aeronautics to nearly 13,000 undergraduates and graduate students attending its residential campuses in Daytona Beach, Florida, and Prescott, Arizona. The school also provides educational opportunities for more than 27,000 working civilian and military professionals throughout more than 130 worldwide campuses across the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East, and through online, self-paced distance learning.

One of Embry-Riddle's biggest challenges had been to support its extensive network of small outlying "campuses," where many times not enough students would register for a particular course to justify the cost of an instructor to teach it.

*“EagleVision's virtual classroom environment lets far more students connect face-to-face with our outstanding faculty, many of whom are tops in their field. That simply wasn't possible before.”*

Becky Vasquez  
 Director of Student and Technology Services  
 Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

“For example, we might have a top aviation business manager teaching a course in one of our San Diego classrooms, and a handful of students in Seattle and Las Vegas who want to enroll in the same course,” explained Becky Vasquez, director of student and technology services for Embry-Riddle. “Without adequate numbers to support the cost of instructors in each location, we might have to cancel the outlying course offerings — disappointing those students and reducing our revenue. EagleVision, which runs on Saba Centra technology, lets us connect our classrooms and offer live courses to students hundreds or thousands of miles away — taught by the best faculty in their field.”

### Highly Interactive Virtual Classroom Environment

Although a few students connect from home, most students taking courses over EagleVision also attend one of Embry-Riddle's worldwide campuses. The classroom setting enables the school to better manage the session, with Web video for two-way, face-to-face interaction and often Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for economical, high-quality audio.

Typically, the remote instructor is also in a classroom setting with students in attendance, in addition to those students participating over the Web. Faculty members are trained in how to prepare for EagleVision classes, and they use Agenda Builder to efficiently load their class content ahead of time. Instructors also hold practice sessions to gain experience with tools such as the interactive whiteboard before going online the first time.

In addition to the two-way video and audio connection, which helps keep students focused and involved, students and instructors both enjoy using the "emoticons" for raising a hand to ask a question, using a smiley face to indicate laughter, or using clapping hands for applause. Exams are generally given by staff at the local site or securely online with Blackboard, using randomized question sets and timed assessments.

Many EagleVision courses are recorded — without the video content — and posted in Embry-Riddle's Blackboard Learning Management System. Students can easily make up missed classes or prepare for exams by calling up recordings with just the touch of a button.

"There's a lot of value in EagleVision's replay capabilities," Vasquez commented. "Students can go back afterwards to easily review portions of a class. This is especially helpful if the class is working together on mathematical equations or trying to absorb complex concepts in a lecture."

### Far-Reaching Benefits

The Saba Centra Suite is providing far-reaching benefits to Embry-Riddle by enabling the university to extend beyond the limitations of its previous brick-and-mortar and traditional distance learning options.

Saba Centra is helping the university offer virtual classroom-based training to a wider range of prospective students than ever before, in the process enabling Embry-Riddle to increase enrollments. As a tuition-driven institution, this

is obviously a key element in its strategic plan. Further, by being able to use top-quality faculty to teach a larger percentage of its classroom-based courses — without travel expenses — Embry-Riddle is also greatly enhancing student satisfaction and loyalty. A satisfied student body will enhance enrollment growth over time.

"EagleVision's virtual classroom environment lets far more students connect face-to-face with our outstanding faculty, many of whom are tops in their field," noted Vasquez. "That simply wasn't possible before."

Although most EagleVision students come to a classroom at an Embry-Riddle campus, not all do. Recently, a student in Embry-Riddle's Technical Management graduate program — which relies on the cohort method — had to move from Seattle, where the program was being taught. Instead of dropping out, the student was able to stay with her cohort through the use of EagleVision.

Embry-Riddle is also beginning the planning necessary to create hybrid courses — distance learning offerings that are perhaps 50% asynchronous online learning, and 50% synchronous virtual classroom offerings. Some weeks, students could do self-paced work, getting assignments online, reading and writing, and sharing ideas through discussion boards. Other weeks, students could attend virtual classes over the Web.

"The possibilities are truly endless," Vasquez remarked. "The only limitation is our imagination."

Moving beyond the classroom, Embry-Riddle is using the Saba Centra Suite for staff training, Webinars, and faculty meetings. Recently, faculty members from the Memphis regional area were able to meet virtually via EagleVision. The meeting was recorded using Saba Centra's recording capabilities so that other Embry-Riddle faculty all over the world could share the insight of these experts.

"There's so much industry expertise around the globe, and we're just beginning to tap into it," said Vasquez. "Everywhere I go throughout the Embry-Riddle Worldwide Campus, there's an enormous amount of excitement about the technology. The potential for Saba Centra to help with our mission in every way is tremendous."