![Valparaiso University logo]

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>
> Becky Klein, manager of client relations, Valparaiso University

Valparaiso University supports campus-wide training initiatives with lynda.com

Valparaiso University is a Lutheran, liberal arts institution located in northwest Indiana, an hour's drive from Chicago. It offers more than 70 bachelor's, 40 master's, and two doctorate degree programs in law, nursing, business, engineering, and more. Founded in 1859, the university has 4,500 students and more than 1,300 faculty and staff members.

Challenge: reinvent training across campus

In recent years, the university undertook its most comprehensive 20-year visioning and strategic planning process ever, involving alumni, students, faculty, staff, and community leaders. Subsequently, the IT department reviewed its programs and procedures.

"Training was always an area where IT had room for improvement," said Becky Klein, manager of client relations. "Our one official training specialist was teaching the same classes over and over, overseeing surveys, and facilitating many one-on-one sessions. It was hard to find time for new courses. She was just one person. Attendance dropped off. Our training had become a little stale.

"We wanted to reinvent and reinvigorate training," Klein said. "We also wanted to be more proactive. We began to ask, 'What needs are coming in the next six months or in the next one, two, or three years?' We wanted to say, 'We can help accomplish the goals of the strategic plan.' We wanted to be on the leading edge of adopting new technologies."

The IT team realized an on-demand online video training solution available across the entire campus could support its goals and proactively engage all faculty, students, and staff. The university previously had used online training, but did so on a more limited basis relying on a provider that was slow to add new content, Klein said. "It was OK, but not great, and we didn't really market it well, so it wasn't used."

Solution: lyndaCampus online video instruction

In 2010, a Valparaiso University administrator heard a peer from a leading East Coast institution discuss lynda.com at a conference. After researching options, the university in 2011 purchased lyndaCampus, which provided campus-wide access to the lynda.com course library.

The breadth and high quality of lynda.com content factored heavily in the decision, Klein said.

To encourage adoption, Klein and the IT department employed several campus-wide strategies. These included emails; digital signs on flat screens; presentations during new student orientations, fall welcome activities, and employee orientations; and a springtime workshop sponsored by the faculty resource center.

"We try to highlight the flexibility of the system," Klein said. "If you want to carve out long chunks of time and do a whole lynda.com course, that's great. Or if you only have a few minutes here and there, it works for you, too. You can get in, get an answer to a question or find what you need to learn, and get back to work in five minutes.

"Every time I talk about lynda.com, I try to mention that you can use it on mobile devices," she said. "And I love that certificates of completion are available to document what I've done."

Result: freeing IT resources

lyndaCampus eases the burden on the IT help desk, freeing time for staff to focus on bigger issues and specialized training.

"Taking the basics off the plate lets us focus, for example, on explaining all the customizations on our Blackboard system, or all the individual apps we've written on campus. We can refer people to general lynda.com courses on Gmail, Microsoft Office, or Windows and then go create additional custom training specific to our environment."

In addition, lyndaCampus provides students, faculty, and staff with timely training during technologies migrations.

"We recently switched email platforms, migrating to Google Apps for Education," Klein said. "It was a major cultural shift for the campus. The lynda.com courses on Gmail, Google Calendar, and other topics really helped students, faculty, and staff with the transition. They could check out lynda.com on their own time for basic or in-depth instruction."

Result: career counseling and advancement

lynda.com expanded faculty and staff professional development opportunities—and gave employees the ability to grow at their own pace.

"I love lynda.com. It helped me advance," said staff member Tammy Hartman, who took a combination of college and lynda.com courses

to move from a campus housekeeping position to a technical assistant job with the Office of Undergraduate Admission. "And then I was able to advance into another position, administrative assistant for Integrated Marketing and Communications. None of it would have been possible without the help of lynda.com.

"I also have used lynda.com to help with my privacy settings on Facebook," Hartman said. "In the future, I know lynda.com will offer updated courses that help me keep my information safe.

"I like how easy lynda.com instructors make each step," she said. "From basics to the advanced, they cover everything. I can skip what I don't need and watch what I do as much as I want. I plan to continue using lynda.com to advance my work skills. I also plan to learn about photography as a hobby. I never had a chance—until now."

Result: supplementing curricula

Faculty use lyndaCampus to support classroom activities, assigning online video instruction for homework while reserving class time for concept mastery and one-to-one assistance. For example, Klein noted that a writing teacher uses lyndaCampus to teach mail merges using Microsoft® Word® and Excel®. "That frees her to talk about communications concepts rather than mechanics."

Professor Mark Fortney advises students in his design and desktop publishing courses to use lyndaCampus tutorials on the Adobe® Creative Suite® for technical training and project support.

"I handpick videos from lynda.com that relate to the curriculum for each week," Fortney said. "lynda.com is always current. This is important because the life of many technical skills is six months to a year.

"I always encourage my students to continue learning even after they graduate, to make sure their skills are up to date and that they stay marketable in the job hunting arena," Fortney added.

Looking ahead

Valparaiso University intends to increasingly use lyndaCampus to supplement classroom curricula and will feature the service in an expanded slate of faculty and staff training courses. "We'll be doing some courses on how to improve presentation skills, highlighting tools like PowerPoint, Keynote, and YouTube. And we're going to do a lynda.com course to make sure employees know it's an available resource."

Another goal is to use lyndaCampus more at the university Career Center. "We want to encourage students to use lynda.com when preparing to obtain a job—highlighting courses on resumes, interviewing skills, and negotiation."

In addition, the help desk will increasingly refer students to lynda.com for technical support, Klein said. "We also are going to include links to lynda.com in our training documentation and handouts."