

Samuel Merritt University Case Study



Samuel Merritt's Commitment to Educational Equity

The Information Technology Services (ITS) and Academic and Instructional Innovation (A&I) departments at Samuel Merritt University (SMU) continuously research and adopt new educational technologies to enrich the faculty and student experience. To that end, Marcus Walton, executive director of ITS, introduced Panopto lecture capture to the University in 2015. Initially, the recordings were uploaded to MediaCore.

When MediaCore announced later that year that it would discontinue this service, Elba Rios, a senior instructional designer on Samuel Merritt University's A&I team, was asked to research the best video management solution for recording, storing, and sharing video content. Rios' felt that Panopto's lecture capture and content library would enable new ways to teach, engage, and learn. Panopto was at the top of the list.

Panopto's video management system was a natural fit thanks to its recording and engagement features, flexibility, and customer service. In summer 2016, ITS and A&I collaborated to migrate SMU to Panopto.

The university remains committed to expanding educational access and equity to its students, and video has already become a cornerstone of this commitment by ensuring that all students have access to the resources they need to learn anywhere, anytime.

Engaging Students and Expanding Access with Video

With Rios' encouragement, Barb Puder, associate professor and chair of the Basic Sciences department, was one of the first Samuel Merritt faculty members to use Panopto. For years, Puder had wanted to create videos that explained difficult neuroscience topics and were available 24/7 to her students for review.

About Samuel Merritt University

Based in Oakland, California, Samuel Merritt University offers degrees in the health sciences with a focus on compassion and community engagement. Through its programs in nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and podiatric medicine, Samuel Merritt University students become caring, skilled professionals who are motivated to improve health outcomes and increase access to care. The school prides itself on its hands-on learning experiences, dedication to community, and strength in diversity.



Her vision was to create short 20- to 30-minute videos offering “high-yield information”—the most important points students need to know for exams and future patient care. She envisioned these shorter videos in place of recordings of 50-minute or two-hour lectures. “I’ve planned out my high-yield information to keep it moving,” said Puder. “This generation of students wants to get their information in a quick and succinct package.” The response was overwhelmingly positive. After her initial two videos, Puder’s students wanted more.

Over time, Puder also began using a flipped classroom format. While her class had originally met in person for three hours, students were now able to watch an assigned two hour video on demand—and then meet live virtually for an hour of scheduled class time to ask questions and discuss the topic. “People have more control over when they’re ready to learn, whether that’s Saturday afternoon or Tuesday night... instead of us dictating ‘you must learn during this timeframe,’” said Puder. She also added her videos to a shared folder in Panopto so her colleagues and their classes could access the content.

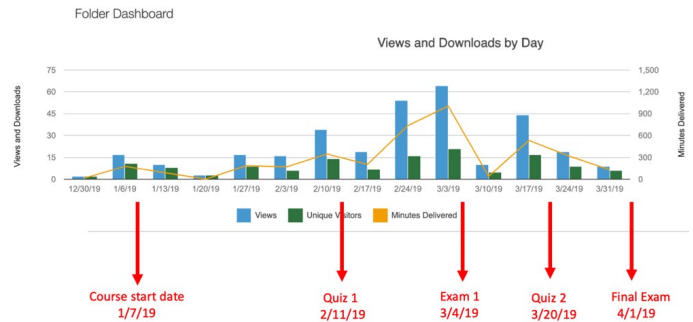
Karissa Legleiter, an assistant professor in the Basic Sciences department, started using Panopto in 2020. She worked with Rios’ team to record her anatomy lectures as videos for students to watch at home. “I would use my iPad so that I could draw—pathways, arterial supply, nerve innervation—instead of just talking on the video,” she said. Over time, Legleiter also learned the best ways to organize and edit her videos, improving the quality of her Panopto content.

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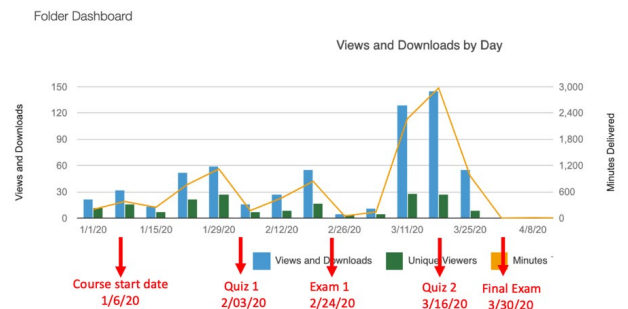
In time, Legleiter also began to record videos in the laboratory of archaeological material and models to provide access when students couldn’t come to the lab themselves for review. “I’m able to walk through a femur or tibia or humerus, and they can watch that video at home again,” she said. “It’s this continuous repetition of the material, which students love.”

These videos ultimately expanded access and increased engagement. When Puder was still doing live lectures, she and Rios conducted research on the use of recorded instructional videos. Based on their findings, students were watching supplemental videos, with peak usage happening in the time preceding an exam or quiz:

2019 Neuroscience Videos Total Usage



2020 Neuroscience Videos Total Usage



“It’s this continuous repetition of the material, which students love.”

— Karissa Legleiter, assistant professor, Basic Sciences

The flexibility of video has been important for adult learners, like those in Legleiter’s classes. “Panopto has allowed adult learners to be able to learn at their home or while their kids [are around] and they can still be present,” she said. “Students really love that they can watch or listen to the lecture

Puder, B.A., Rios, E.; Content Review videos supplement student learning and course experience. SMU Winter Poster session 2021

But interestingly, because the video modules were posted in advance, they found that students also accessed them before classes began, familiarizing themselves with the concepts prior to the course. This finding confirmed the importance of increased access to educational content—and proved that students benefited from the flexibility to learn when and how they want.

A Commitment to Universal Design

The concept of “universal design” is a crucial focus at Samuel Merritt. Under this initiative, faculty and staff work to create educational materials that are accessible to all. Panopto empowers universal design for faculty and students. “Having the videos accessible is super easy for everyone. It’s easy for teachers. It’s easy for students to access,” said Puder.

With asynchronous video, students who may be hesitant to interrupt a live lecture to ask a question or visit an instructor during office hours can feel free to pause, replay, take notes, or change the playback speed. “A lot of students are intimidated to meet with the professor. So instead of asking their question or admitting they don’t know, they just won’t ask and then they don’t perform as well,” said Puder. “The minute I started making videos, no one came to office hours anymore, even the brave people, because they could get what they needed if they looked back at the video.”

Panopto provides options for students who have disabilities or health conditions, prefer different learning styles, speak a primary language that is not English, or benefit from learning at their own pace.

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— **Karissa Legleiter**, assistant professor, Basic Sciences



In Legleiter’s courses, students range from having a strong science background to none at all. A traditional live lecture assumes all students are learning at the same pace. “Being able to use Panopto with a lecture or review video lets students work at a pace that’s comfortable for them, which I think is equitable for all. Learning is not one size fits all,” she said. “I think that’s the most equitable thing we can do: put the learning in the hands of the students.”

More specifically, students with speech impediments and visual/auditory learning styles have shared with Legleiter how her Panopto videos help them learn. “We have a lot of new words in anatomy. It’s kind of like learning a new language,” said Legleiter. “[Students] say, ‘When I have the recordings, it gives me the confidence to listen to the words and say them out loud, and it makes me more confident when coming to the lab or in the future being able to speak to another clinician.’”

Closed captioning gives students the option to read along with the audio, or follow the video without the audio when they don’t want to disturb others. And “when there is an ADA compliance request, we can address it,” said Rios. “We enabled site-wide computer-generated smart captions, so that provides equity. Everyone has access to the content regardless of their learning needs.” The school can also provide professional captioning upon request.

To align with the university's commitment to universal design, Rios actively promotes ways to make videos that are accessible, effective, and engaging. Clarity, concise content, and visibility are at the core of ensuring that all students can learn from video content. "At the university, universal design happens in just about everything we do," said Rios. "Addressing all the needs and tapping on knowledge for all... that's what we at the university really advocate for."

"Not Going Back to the Old Way"

The faculty and staff at Samuel Merritt have seen the incredible benefits of video and how important it is as they continue to focus on expanding educational equity. "I am very vocal about not going back to the old way of teaching after this," said Puder. "I don't think I will give a stand-in-front-of-the-podium lecture probably ever again. I feel like this way is more effective for students."

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— **Barb Puder**, associate professor and chair
Basic Sciences

She goes on to explain: "The videos have just opened up the world for the students. You can tell it has created this equity for students who need more time to analyze the information... And for other people who can hear it straight through, it's quick for them and they can move onto the next thing and they aren't controlled by having to be in a lecture during this [set] time."

Students are demanding video. Now that they have access, they want more. "[This generation of students is] always on their phones. They're going to look up a video on how to do something. That's how they learn," said Puder. "If I don't change with the needs of the students, I'm not going to be valued... [Video] is the way we go."



To the Future

Legleiter echoes the need and demand for video moving forward. She sees how Panopto creates a richer learning environment for her students. Even when students don't have access to the physical classroom or the resources to get to campus, video makes learning possible. "Everyone should have the ability to learn if they want to. Panopto makes that realistic for people," said Legleiter. "I love learning and I love teaching. Being able to give every student the ability to learn with Panopto—it's priceless."

“Students really love that they can watch or listen to the lecture wherever they are. They listen in their car, at the gym. And the biggest feedback I got was that they could stop the video, pause it, and work through the material at their own pace.”

— **Karissa Legleiter**, assistant professor, Basic Sciences