



George Mason University Creates Transformational Active Learning Environments With Mersive Solstice

George Mason University, GMU, is Virginia's largest public research university. The primary campus in Fairfax, Virginia, focuses on bold, progressive education that serves its students and faculty. Adhering to their core value, "Innovation is Our Tradition," GMU strives to give their academic community the tools needed for a transformational learning experience that helps them grow as individuals, scholars, and professionals.

The newest building on GMU's Fairfax campus is Horizon Hall. Opened in January 2021, the six-floor, 218,000-square-foot academic building includes state-of-the-art active learning classrooms and collaborative learning spaces, a significant asset to the GMU community. Active learning classrooms are defined as flexible, student-centered, technology-rich classrooms. During the 4-5 year project, GMU's goal was to be innovative in all aspects of Horizon Hall, from the building and room design to the technology, all elements that enhance the academic experience and lead to better learning outcomes.

Challenge

During the Horizon Hall project, GMU had the initiative that at least 30% of all classrooms support active learning pedagogy. To meet this challenge, they needed to ensure that their learning spaces were as flexible as possible, including technology that would accommodate and enhance the flexible learning environment.

Without any fixed seating, facilitating active learning classrooms required a way for both students and faculty to collaborate and share content from anywhere in the classrooms, so wireless content sharing was a critical requirement. A reliable wireless solution that would work seamlessly on the GMU network, accommodating the flexibility of the spaces without compromising the security, was very important.

Key requirements for Horizon Hall's collaboration technology included:

- ✓ **Wireless content sharing** to support flexible, active learning spaces
- ✓ **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)** compatibility to enable sharing from any device
- ✓ **Intuitive technology** that required little to no training for faculty and students
- ✓ **Security and scalability** to integrate with GMU's network & accommodate future needs

Solution



To meet the demands of flexible, innovative learning spaces in Horizon Hall, GMU deployed 165 Solstice Pods across 28 classrooms, 15 collaboration spaces, 9 conference rooms, 8 huddle spaces and within additional transitional spaces throughout Horizon Hall. Solstice's content sharing capabilities met the challenge of creating seamless collaboration and providing the perfect solution for team-oriented active learning classrooms.

Several capability set Mersive Solstice apart from other technology solutions:

- ✓ **Wireless Sharing** - The fully wireless content sharing solution, without cables, dongles, etc., was essential for the learning spaces. The absence of dedicated AV rooms also made wireless sharing a critical requirement, while also eliminating potential maintenance issues with cables or other hardware and creating a seamless learning environment for the GMU community.
- ✓ **Ability to BYOD** - It was essential that both faculty and students be able to bring any wireless device – a laptop, tablet, or smartphone; Android or iOs; PC or Mac, etc. – into the learning spaces and have that device work well and integrate with the existing AV systems in the room, and Mersive does that.
- ✓ **Easy to Use** - Solstice's ease of use was a key factor for GMU, providing an intuitive solution for both faculty and students no matter what device they are using.
- ✓ **Secure & Scalable** - Solstice provides seamless integration to GMU's network to support the collaborative learning spaces. It also provides an easily scalable solution so GMU can add or reconfigure their Solstice deployment to support evolving technology needs.

Results



100%

Number of learning spaces that accommodate wireless collaboration with Solstice

28

Number of classrooms that use Solstice to support active learning environments.

100%

Touchless collaboration technology implemented throughout Horizon Hall

Overall, GMU has had enormous success with Mersive technology. Solstice provides a wireless solution that anyone can utilize across multiple learning spaces and also address GMU's primary pain points and technology requirements, providing a wireless solution that is not only secure and scalable, but easy to use for both faculty and students.

