

California State University, Fullerton

Customer Spotlight

Dropbox for Education enables the university's students, faculty, and staff to collaborate on any device from any location, significantly reducing paper use and hardware costs.



“A faculty member said to me, ‘I wanted to thank you for one of the best innovations you’ve done – bringing Dropbox to our campus.’ From my seat, that sums up Dropbox for Education’s impact.”



Amir Dabirian
Vice President of Information Technology / CIO

Key Results



Increased productivity through mobile devices



30% reduction in paper use across campus



Stronger security over sensitive documents

THE CHALLENGE

Eliminating communication barriers

Cal State Fullerton is one of the most diverse schools in the US, ranking fifth nationally in the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded to underrepresented students. But the university, renowned for breaking down walls among its nearly 39,000 students and 4,000 faculty and staff, realized it needed to be more open in another critical area: IT. Students working on assignments in the classroom or on school desktops had to email files to themselves when finishing up on other devices. Faculty and administration struggled to collaborate on the same documents because they often had trouble accessing the university's shared file servers. “We also had a problem with data duplication — in file servers, online, and on desktops,” says Amir Dabirian, Vice President of Information Technology.

Dropbox for Education emerged as the clear choice after the university concluded it needed a platform-agnostic cloud solution. “We use so many different devices,” Dabirian says. “Dropbox was the common denominator.”

THE SOLUTION

Creating a more agile campus

Moving to Dropbox for Education was easy for CSUF. Faculty, staff, and students can use their existing credentials to log in to Dropbox for Education, as the service integrates with CSUF's identity management provider Shibboleth. In the classroom, the solution has changed the way students and professors get work done. Many professors create shared folders, where students can turn in their assignments, speeding up submissions and grading. Students can continue to work how they want to, being



just as productive on Windows as on Macs. “We can make laboratory data available on any computer, and work together via the Dropbox web interface,” says Josh Smith, Associate Professor of Physics.



Dropbox for Education is also used across student and faculty organizations on campus. Contributors to Tusk Magazine share large videos and graphics files using shared links to put together the online student publication.

Committees across the university, from the Student Senate to the Dean’s Office, collaborate on policy documents and meeting minutes through shared folders. With these files centralized in one place, the university keeps better tabs on important information through the Admin Console. “We knew our users loved Dropbox, and the enterprise product was aligned with our strategic IT goals of innovating and building a dynamic and secure infrastructure,” says Dabirian.

THE RESULTS

Transforming collaboration

Dropbox for Education is helping the university save money and boost productivity. One big success? It has cut paper usage by 30%, leading to fewer physical copies from the Senate and Dean’s Office, and “an overall cultural transformation of not relying on paper,” says Dabirian. Today, an average of 2.4 devices are connected to each Dropbox for Education account at CSUF, allowing the university community to collaborate from anywhere.

What’s more, the savings that result from no longer having to purchase certain hardware, utilities, and backup applications are in the six figures, Dabirian says. IT has been able to focus more on strategic investments and the higher-ed experience as a whole. “Contributing knowledge globally and educating our students is why we’re all here,” says Dabirian. “Having the technology to secure and share that data will only bring higher education to new levels, and Dropbox has been a great partner in that effort.”

Use case

How Dropbox for Education helps

Mobile	The university provides iPads with Dropbox for Education, allowing access to information from any spot across its 236-acre campus and beyond.
Collaboration	Students, faculty, and staff rely on Dropbox shared folders from any device or platform, working together on all files from magazine graphics to lab results.
Backup	Sensitive research documents are automatically backed up, providing peace of mind for faculty, staff, and students.

“Students and faculty don’t have to think about how they collaborate. They don’t have to ask, ‘What tool am I going to use to work on projects with someone?’ It’s just ubiquitous collaboration.”



Kenneth Kass, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Information Technology /
Academic Technology Services

