

CASE STUDY

# Northwood Technical College Creates More Opportunities for Learning with BlueJeans

Wisconsin-based Northwood Technical College wanted to give more students the opportunity to learn with flexible options to meet their needs while keeping programs cost-effective. To do this, it took advantage of streaming lectures from one campus to the rest using BlueJeans Meetings, expanding programming across all four campuses and three outreach centers.

“You can imagine how much more cost-effective it was for us,” says Distance Learning Specialist Liz Elza.

But it did more than just reduce costs. By upgrading to BlueJeans Meetings for its video conferencing platform, Northwood Tech made its delivery of virtual learning much more efficient, freeing up staff to put more focus into meeting students’ needs.

## Connecting with Students More Effectively

Previously, lecturers at Northwood Tech couldn’t just initiate a video conferencing session. Everything had to be arranged centrally. So the college decided to seek a cloud-based, mobile approach to meeting and collaborating, adopting BlueJeans Meetings for virtual learning.

“BlueJeans was an easy choice because students could join a session from any device with a camera, as long as they were connected to the internet,” says Elza. “It was also a scalable and cost-effective solution.”



**Industry:** Education

**Challenge:** Wisconsin-based Northwood Technical College needed a better and more cost-effective solution to make its virtual learning programs accessible to more students.

**Solution:** After years of using conference bridges, the technical college adopted BlueJeans Meetings as a video conferencing platform for virtual learning.

**Results:** Northwood Tech has made learning more accessible and improved how instructors connect to students, facilitating more effective learning.

Using BlueJeans Meetings has streamlined the process of scheduling classes, allowing staff to focus more on meeting students’ needs.

Students who suddenly had to shift to virtual learning during the pandemic felt engaged and motivated to persevere.

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– LIZ ELZA, DISTANCE LEARNING SPECIALIST, NORTHWOOD TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The move to the BlueJeans platform was transformational for Northwood Tech. It made it possible for lecturers to initiate a video conferencing session and connect with students on the fly, facilitating more effective learning.

The biggest change for instructors is having their own BlueJeans ID, which means they have virtual class connection anytime they need it.

“They can just copy and paste their assigned BlueJeans Meetings details into our Learning Management System and have immediate access to it for each class they’re teaching,” says Elza. This has eased staff’s workload tremendously.

“It has enabled us to shift our focus away from repetitive scheduling processes, allowing us to put our time and energy into meeting our students’ needs.”

### Shifting to Remote Learning Easily

Northwood Tech’s adoption of BlueJeans Meetings turned out to be pivotal when all classes across the United States had to switch to remote learning due to COVID-19. While many other colleges rushed to find a way to deliver virtual classes, Northwood Tech was all set, making the transition quick and smooth.

“We were really ahead of the game that way,” says Elza. “A lot of other colleges looked at our video conferencing platform and were able to understand what we had done to make distance learning effective so they could build theirs.”

### Making Distance Learning Work Through Interaction

While Elza understands very well the good side of distance learning, she also knows that it’s not always as easy as it seems.

“In a perfect world, it’s really simple. But it can be overwhelming. With BlueJeans, we have an opportunity to keep students engaged and keep their learning personal.”

She notes how having a video call, where the instructor talked about concepts discussed in textbooks or skills taught through recordings, made a vast difference to students during the pandemic.

“Our students were able to access their class recordings anytime, giving them the opportunity to revisit a concept covered in class easily and efficiently.”

## Embracing BlueJeans for Remote Learning

Even as traditionally face-to-face programs and classes have resumed, Northwood Tech continues to offer BlueJeans Meetings for a majority of its courses. It has also recently tested the new BlueJeans for Remote Learning.

This feature pack comprises enhancements to BlueJeans Meetings and includes classroom management tools that support hybrid and virtual learning. Feedback from instructors who have tried the platform has been very positive so far, according to Elza.

“They love how they can have everything up in one menu. Also, it keeps track of everything, which is great. It makes it easier for instructors to stay in contact with students.”

In particular, instructors rave about the interactive whiteboard. “They’ve never seen anything like that. It’s just so nice to have all the students collaborating in one place. And it’s so easy to save that collab board and open it back up on the next class.”

Elza is rolling out BlueJeans for Remote Learning to more users as the college embraces virtual learning even more.

“We believe virtual learning provides the innovative teaching practices we strive for to put learning first at Northwood Tech.”

### ABOUT NORTHWOOD TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Northwood Tech is a top-ranked community college that serves the northwest region of Wisconsin. With campuses in Ashland, New Richmond, Rice Lake, and Superior, it provides diverse programs, including career-focused degrees and certificates. Northwood Tech also offers customized training for businesses and a wide range of personal and career enrichment courses.