



MASERGY

Cornell University

# Cornell delivers virtual classroom experiences without disruptions

Distance learning higher education programs provide access to high-quality education for students regardless of their location. But, limitations in technology can make the experience frustrating when compared to a traditional classroom environment.

A part of the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management, Cornell-Queen's Executive MBA Program (CQEMBA) was using Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) to deliver video conferencing for classes held three Saturdays per month from Cornell's broadcast studio to multiple boardroom locations throughout North America.

Since the program was being delivered over this legacy technology, qualified technical support was difficult to find — especially on weekends when the school typically encountered its greatest need. The university was experiencing increased network drops and latency, but the ISDN service provider's poor customer service often resulted in wait times of more than 48 hours, including unresolved network problems and hours of lost class time. Additionally, Cornell's plan to move to HD video conferencing would be too expensive over its existing ISDN network.

Providing a flawless virtual classroom experience is the primary goal for Cornell's CQEMBA program as it aims to reach a wide and geographically diverse audience. In an effort to realize its vision and deliver the highest quality video conferencing possible to its students, Cornell decided to upgrade to a superior technology for its video conferencing solution.

The graduate school sought a reliable network solutions partner with personalized, proactive customer service, sophisticated technology, and flexible bandwidth capabilities to enable future growth needs and improve the learning experience for students and faculty.

The university reviewed several companies and found most providers had sluggish response times of three days to a week to deliver the basic information needed in a request for information (RFI) proposal.



**“Reliability was our number one concern, and we’ve been incredibly impressed with Masergy. When the technology works as perfectly as Masergy’s, our concerns simply fade away!”**

Stephen Demmings, Video Conferencing Manager



## Solutions

The IT team for the CQEMBA program was initially introduced to Masergy through the Visual Communications Industry Group (VCI-G), a user group dedicated to technology collaboration and video conferencing. When Masergy entered the RFI process, the school was impressed by the company's personal, honest, and responsive approach to customer service and its knowledge of the visual communications environment. After thorough due diligence, Cornell determined Masergy's solution offerings, reliability, and superior customer service could meet both their immediate needs and long-term objectives.

As part of the initial network solution implementation, Masergy offered the university a no-cost, 60-day trial period to evaluate its capabilities and network performance. After a successful trial, Cornell decided to move forward with full implementation across 13 sites, making Masergy its primary network provider for the CQEMBA program in the United States.

Now, the graduate program's broadcast studio and multiple remote boardrooms are transmitted through Masergy's network, allowing a seamless connection between the teaching faculty member and students across the U.S.

## The implemented solution includes Masergy's

- **Private access** for guaranteed service and security, as well as improved application performance in an easy-to-manage network environment
- **Video service plane** to ensure quality of service around video conferencing
- **Network function virtualization** to enable a "routerless office" and reliable connectivity for remote sites

## Business success

Through internal tracking, the program's IT staff observed the previous provider's constant network drops caused two to five minutes of lost class time at one or more sites during every session. But, on Masergy's software-defined network, downtime is virtually non-existent. Without any disruptions and with superior quality images, the video solution now enhances the learning environment for both students and faculty. The system facilitates intimate

### Recognized results

- Reliable network platform enabling superior quality video performance
- Proactive customer service with around the clock monitoring and immediate response times
- Cost savings for streamlined HD video implementation on a pure IP/MPLS platform versus ISDN
- Scalable bandwidth to allow future program expansion beyond North America
- Reduced equipment and maintenance costs with advanced network function virtualization
- Increased productivity through network efficiency and negligible downtime
- Accurate and simplified billing accessible via a simple online portal

interaction between the professor and the learning teams, as well as between the teams themselves.

With Masergy's scalable network platform, the Cornell-Queen's Executive MBA Program can expand its geographic reach to provide students a forum to earn an Ivy League MBA without extensive travel or scheduling requirements.

Additionally, with Masergy's added technical support and expertise, the school's internal IT team is now able to devote its time to its core responsibility of improving overall program performance.

## About

Johnson Graduate School of Management: Founded in 1946 and consistently ranked as one of the top graduate schools of business, Johnson is Cornell University's graduate school of management. The school maintains an intense, collaborative community, where students can work toward an MBA through one of four programs.

The CQEMBA offers a flexible learning model featuring a combination of on-campus sessions and weekend video conference sessions in local boardrooms. The program relies on multi-point interactive video conferencing to link the faculty and student boardroom learning teams in 11 cities in the United States. Classes conclude within 16 months, and participants complete a final, team-based project after the last class session.