

# Driving Classroom

## INNOVATION

SUPPORTED BY  
MIDDLE ATLANTIC PRODUCTS C5 CREDENZAS

Middle Atlantic C5 credenzas fit the look and the purpose of new active learning classrooms at William Paterson University

New classroom teaching models are changing how students learn. At William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, instructors are embracing the newly installed active learning classrooms (ALC) in the school's new building, University Hall. These classrooms are designed to foster interactive, flexible, student-centered learning experiences. Unlike a traditional lecture hall, there is no front of the classroom where instructors stand to lecture on course material. Instead, instructors move freely around the room— coaching and interacting with the students who are grouped in clusters of tables where they have access to technology that allow them to easily present their work to their peers.

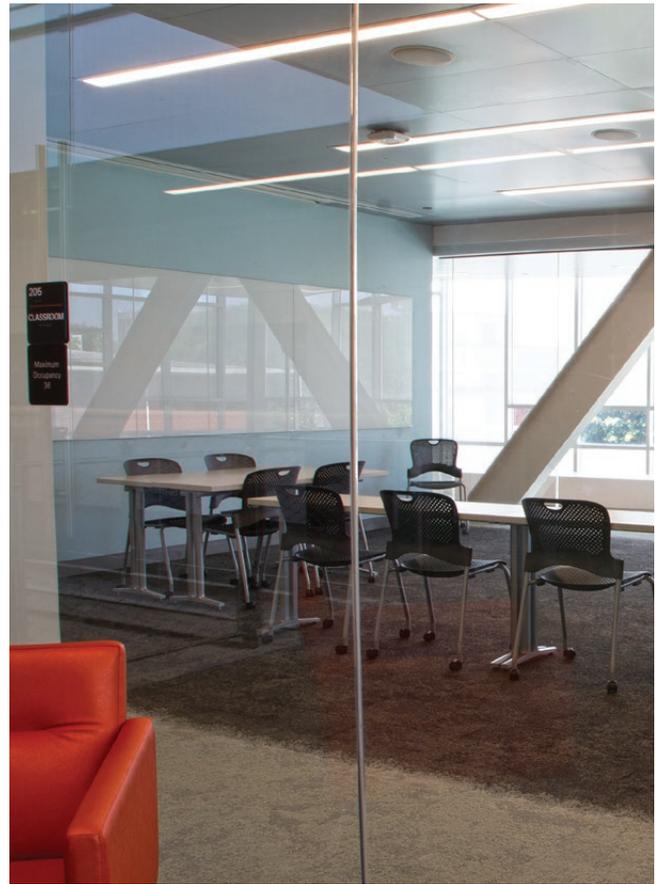
This new teaching platform enables instructors to help their students demonstrate a process, analyze concepts, and apply the learning material to real-world situations, encouraging more dialogue than a traditional classroom. A crucial part of making these kinds of classrooms successful is granting instructors quick and easy access to the technology they need to control and send content on the fly to the displays at each of the student tables. Selecting the right piece of furniture that was not only approved by the architect but was built for AV wasn't easy, but Middle Atlantic's C5 Credenza alleviated the headaches that often come when working on a new build.

Working with the architect "In the past, we have relied on the architect to specify everything in the room, but they have a very specific look in mind. It can be challenging trying to find a solution that balances their vision with our AV system needs," said Bill O'Donnell, CTS, EAVA, DMC-D, AV/Network Design Engineer for Instruction and Research Technology at William Paterson University. "For our ALCs, the architect wanted custom-made millwork cabinets. We were installing about \$20,000 worth of equipment into these cabinets, so it was critical that whatever we put into these rooms would ensure the system's reliability and really allow the faculty and students to reap the full potential of this new learning platform. We had concerns that the custom cabinets wouldn't guarantee the best system integrity, so we opted to search for a purpose-built solution that could meet our needs and hopefully match the aesthetic the architect had in mind."

The available options were mostly limited to desks, a solution Deputy CIO Sandy Miller specifically wanted to avoid because it would have made the room look and operate too much like a traditional lecture room. Instead, Miller requested a more inconspicuous piece of furniture that would centralize all the technology while providing instructors with a user-friendly operation base. Middle Atlantic's C5 Series Credenza provided the perfect balance of look, functionality, and flexibility.

### DESIGNING THE RACK

Once O'Donnell had selected the size and style of frame he needed, Middle Atlantic built, assembled, and shipped the frame immediately — an exclusive Middle Atlantic



feature that the company calls Frame to Furniture™ and really saves time on the job. With the frame ready, it was down to selecting on the wood skins, which simply snap onto the frame once they were ready.

"The Frame to Furniture feature allowed the architect to choose the style, color, finish, door style, vent finish, and handles," said O'Donnell. "With both contemporary and modern styles and more 30 color and finish options, the architect was able to really customize and select the details that met their aesthetic priorities while the integrator kept working — it was seamless. We were all impressed with the final product and I was happy that our equipment wasn't going to cook thanks to the quiet internal fans — the C5 provided a reliable infrastructure built for our AV."



Middle Atlantic C5 credenzas fit the look and the purpose of new active learning classrooms at William Paterson University

# Driving Classroom

## INNOVATION

### SUPPORTED BY MIDDLE ATLANTIC PRODUCTS C5 CREDENZAS

"If we had gone with the traditional millwork that the architect was looking at, we would have needed two or more people to move that piece into place," said O'Donnell. "And if it didn't meet the rack sizes, we would have had to cut the bottom out in order to get all the equipment to fit. I've seen that happen and it's really compromises the integrity of the furniture and of the system. It's like moving a house of cards. But we didn't have to worry about any of that with the C5 and Frame to Furniture concept sped up the installation even more."

In addition to easing the design process with Frame to Furniture, Middle Atlantic also provides configuration tools that are available on its website. The tools enabled O'Donnell to confidently design a two-bay frame using the program's built-in intelligent pre-selected options that provided him with the appropriate components to mount a PC, document camera, and VCR/DVD combo as well as a laptop connection within the rack. It also allowed him to build in plenty of room for any future rack additions. All the inputs and outputs for the room feed to an 8x8 switcher also housed within the credenza and a driving component for the rack frame. With a depth of about 19 inches, O'Donnell discovered that, as he loaded up the rack within the system, he need to size up to the 24-inch credenza model.

"The program alerted me to the fact that I only had one inch of space between the back of the switcher and the back of the panel when I originally selected the 20-inch model. I hadn't even factored that in. With the program's help, I was able to see that the extended depth model made more sense. Had it not alerted me, it really would have slowed down the installation and put us behind schedule because we would have had to cut the back out in order for the switcher to fit," said O'Donnell. "The extended depth model allows us enough room for all the cables and connectors to plug in nicely without them butting up against the panel or forcing them into a hard right angles and causing cable damage and system failures."

#### EASING THE BID PROCESS

With the website's configuration tools, O'Donnell was also able to set up the rack



elevations and add them to the school's bid specification when the installation went out to public bid. The elevations allowed integrator TBS Network Intelligence, which won the final bid, to be on the same page throughout the project and prevented some headaches down the road.

"It really helps integrators thoughtfully layout the systems inside the rack, giving them a guide to refer back to throughout the process. I have experienced an installation where a rackmount power strip was put right underneath the big 8x8 switcher, which is a huge hassle when you're squeezing your hand in there to plug and unplug devices. Middle Atlantic saves integrators trouble and saves us trouble."

A new look for a new kind of classroom With its polished look, the C5 Series Credenza blends so well into the aesthetic of the classroom that instructors and visitors are surprised to learn it's housing all the rack equipment.

"In the past, we built a Middle Atlantic frame into a desk, but the C5 credenza is a much more seamless solution," said O'Donnell. "And with all the active cooling built into to it, we rarely have to worry about the equipment. Nine times out of ten, the calls we get for the ACLs are operator error."

The brand-new ALCs have had such positive reviews from the faculty that the school is currently looking into converting one of the classrooms at its satellite campus. Because of this great experience with Middle Atlantic, O'Donnell wants to install the C5 Credenza in the new ACL but he also has his eyes on Middle Atlantic's new Hub collaboration table for the students. The Hub, which wasn't available when O'Donnell specified the tables for the main campus, is specifically designed for ACLs and ships fully assembled with cable management, power, and mounting systems already integrated — shaving off critical time and errors on the job.

## ABOUT MIDDLE ATLANTIC PRODUCTS

Middle Atlantic Products manufactures exceptional support & protection products to mount Security and other electronics systems including monitoring consoles, video walls, technical furniture, racks and enclosures, thermal and cable management and power distribution & protection. All of our products are engineered to maximize system reliability and to meet the needs of installers; from thermal considerations and built-in cable management on our racks and enclosures, to pre-installed washers on our rack screws, we build in ways to save time and simplify the job.

For technical specifications and in-depth information about Middle Atlantic Products, please click to [www.middleatlantic.com](http://www.middleatlantic.com) or call 1.800.266.7225.

#### CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

300 Fairfield Road  
Fairfield, NJ 07004, U.S.A.  
Voice: 800-266-7225  
Fax: 800-392-3955  
International Voice: +1 973 839-1011  
International Fax: +1 973 831-4982  
[middleatlantic.com](http://middleatlantic.com)

#### CANADA

113 Iber Road, Ottawa,  
Ontario K2S 1E7  
Voice: 888-766-9770  
Fax: 888-599-5009  
[middleatlantic.ca](http://middleatlantic.ca)

#### FACTORY DISTRIBUTION

USA: New Jersey • California • Illinois  
Canada: Ontario

WHAT GREAT SYSTEMS ARE BUILT ON.™

A brand of  Legrand