

Founders Hall AV Systems Upgrades

March 15, 2016

We have been working for the past few months on two proposals for upgrades in Founders Hall, and after many generations of quotes and refinements in design, we have the following for your consideration.

Project One - Install SKYPE system in President's Conference Room

This project includes installing and programming a SKYPE for Business system interface, relocating the monitor to the west wall of the conference room (over the counter) for improved visibility from the table, installing a new wireless microphone system in the room to facilitate audio conferencing even when there is a tablecloth on the table, installing a robotic camera over the relocated video monitor and upgrading the control system for the room to the new Extron Pro series.

In addition to providing a robust SKYPE interface for closed sessions, these changes will make it much easier for those in the room to see the video monitor and for the new video camera to see everyone at the table. The wireless mics will sit along the centerline of the table and provide good audio pickup with or without a tablecloth, and the new control system will provide a better user interface. The system will include an iPad which can be used to control the system in general and will also provide a simple visual interface for controlling the camera. This system will also provide the ability to do telephone conference calls with much better audio quality than the current Polycom system.

The hardware costs for this system have been quoted out as \$25,284 and we are estimating an additional \$4,000 to move the monitor, install the camera and all the new electronics and program the system. The hardware cost includes tax and shipping and a contingency for price and/or hardware changes.

Project Two - Complete Upgrades to Board Room System

We did a partial equipment upgrade to the board room when we added seating to the board tables, but there were limited funds available for AV work in the room. We have been chipping away at the balance of the needed work, but we are really at a point where I don't have a great deal of confidence in the system as a whole, and we have experienced a number of issues during the last few meetings.

Here is a brief list of the current issues:

1. The system has really become too complex to be controlled by the older Extron control system, it needs to be upgraded to the new Pro series controllers.
2. Much of the system is still uses analog video, while all of the newer technology only supports digital video.
3. The audio recorder is difficult for Denise to operate over the network and does not support dropping place markers to split up the audio file into sections that follow the minutes.
4. Part of the system is still standard definition while other parts have always been high definition, and the different aspect ratios of the two systems makes running presentations very difficult.
5. Much of the audio processing is still based on a 12 year old CobraNet network audio processor, which does not integrate well with any of our newer audio equipment.
6. The camera equipment in the room, which was heavily used for the Board of Governors meeting is also standard definition and the wrong format for the webcasts that were done from the facility
7. The Sennheiser audio conferencing system that runs all the microphones has been discontinued by the manufacturer and replacement microphones are no longer available. You may have noticed that we

frequently have buzzing mics that occur unpredictably, we are usually able to repair these after the meeting is over, however there isn't much that can be done during the meeting.

8. Conducting SKYPE meetings in this room is currently very challenging due to the control, audio and video issues.

We are proposing to do the following:

1. Replace existing control system with Extron Pro series equipment.
2. Rewrite the entire control system using the new Extron scripting language.
3. Implement fully digital switching infrastructure for all sources, projectors and displays.
4. Replace the audio recorder with a new networked device, also currently in use in the Student Government council room. Recordings will be accessible on-line to authorized users.
5. Replace the 5 cameras in the board room with new robotic HD cameras to match the camera in the conference room.
6. Replace the remaining old audio processing system with our standard BSS London audio processing gear.
7. Replace the microphone system in the room with a Televic networked system (which is also in use in the Student Government council room)
8. Provide provisions for SKYPE meetings from the Board Room when necessary.

These upgrades and modifications will yield a much more reliable system that is also easier to use. All video sources will finally be in the same format, and all the audio gear will be several generations newer and more reliable.

In addition to operational improvements, these changes will provide for the following future opportunities if the college chooses to implement them:

1. The ability to provide live video coverage and/or recording of board meetings when desired.
2. The ability to provide much better overflow video coverage of meetings that are heavily attended.
3. The ability to implement electronic voting from the microphone system if desired (presently in use by Student Government)
4. The ability to display agenda items as they are being considered.

If we go in this direction, Extron will provide a team of programmers to develop the control program for the system at no cost to us, as we would be a demonstration and test site for this new scripting language.

The cost for the hardware for these upgrades is \$64,800 which includes \$24,000 for the new microphone system. By making the Board Room system identical to the Student Council Room, we will have quick access to additional hardware if either system experiences a problem, since the two rooms virtually never work at the same time.

There is a great deal of work to be done to install the new hardware, which includes remounting 5 cameras in the Board Room ceiling. We estimate the labor on this project to be \$14,000, for a total project cost of \$78,000.

We already have an extensive collection of quotes for both of these projects, so we are ready to go if you decide to proceed with the funding.

Regards,

Bill Eastham
Director, Technical Services