TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Innovative Graduate School Chooses RingCentral for its Customizability, Mobility, and Integration with Google

Company profile

Teachers College, Columbia University is the oldest and largest graduate school of education in the United States.

Year founded

1887

Website

tc.columbia.edu

Headquarters

New York, NY

Size

5,300 students

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Founded in 1887, with the far-reaching vision of linking scientific theory, research, and practice, Teachers College, Columbia University has been on the experimental and cutting edge of education for nearly 130 years. With leading faculty members in areas such as student engagement, nutritional requirements of learning, gun violence, cognitive learning and more, the college has earned its reputation as one of the best graduate schools in the country.

Innovation in the DNA

"Teachers College today is extremely innovative," says Naveed Husain, Chief Information Officer, Teachers College, Columbia University. "For IT to be relevant in this culture, it has to be quick to the draw."

Husain's strategy for doing this is to make IT agile and lightweight, focused on cloud-based technology, and leveraging infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and software as a service (SaaS) instead of building up expensive, site-based hardware. "The cloud gives us flexibility to provide new services faster without worrying about big capital expenses," he says.

When planning the replacement for the college's legacy PBX system, Husain kept this strategy in mind. "I always wanted to do a cloud-based phone system because I like the security geographic redundancy brings," he explains.

Embedding communication within Google Cloud

A key requirement for the new phone system was Google compatibility. "We are a Google Apps for Education customer, so the product had to work cleanly with Google Cloud and Gmail," Husain notes.

The fact that RingCentral is part of the "Recommended for G Suite" program, selected for its high security, reliability, and the quality of integration with Google business tools, is one

reason why Husain chose RingCentral as the college's new phone system.

The benefit, he explains, is easier collaboration among users. "You can click from an email and have a phone conversation. Or one click from an invitation in an email and you're in an online meeting. The crisp integration and clear elegant process is what is truly expected today," Husain notes.

Supporting mobility and improving campus safety

RingCentral's support for mobility was another reason Husain chose this solution for Teachers College, Columbia University. The college has master's degree programs in Singapore and China, and faculty travel all over the world.

"With RingCentral's mobile app, faculty can have their office phones wherever they are. Having the app on their phones, iPads, or computers, whether they're in China, a hotel in Istanbul, or anywhere in the world, it doesn't matter," says Husain. "All they need is an IP address and they're good to go."

The college took advantage of the ability to customize RingCentral to improve safety on campus. Using the RingCentral API, RingCentral Professional Services set up the college's system so that when any phone on the RingCentral account dials 911 (these phones are located in all campus buildings), a text message is automatically sent to the campus security officer on duty. "This will allow that person to reach the site where the call originated without delay due to the confusion of where the call truly originated," explains Husain. "This is a serious undertaking as this is truly a health and safety issue for Teachers College, Columbia University."

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