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To whom it may concern:

In the Fall of 1998 the School of Business Administration at The University of Mississippi completed a major building and construction renovation project to expand and update its facilities. The result was one of the most advanced educational facilities in the country – one which pushes the practical application of the most current network and instructional technology to the limit. The complex has 2,000 network connections and uses more than 100 miles of data cable. Every classroom is equipped with a multimedia presentation system including a BARCO projector, an instructor's computer, VCR, and Elmo. Ten classrooms have network connections at every seat to allow students to bring their portable computers to class. All MBA students are required to have portable computers, and the requirement will soon be extended to undergraduate students as well. Multiple network connections are available in all of the student study areas, group study rooms, and student lounges. Computers, information technology, and connectivity are ubiquitous throughout the building complex.

Without a doubt, the centerpiece of this technology is the EBS Videodidact system in our MIS interactive classrooms. These classrooms have 45 student seats, each with its own computer, with the entire group connected with the Videodidact system. The system allows the instructor to easily control any or all of the students' computers, project any computer's image onto all of the others, interact directly with individual students from one control center, and much more. This seamless and effortless connectivity is an essential element of our instructional strategy in many of our MIS and Statistics courses. We also use the interactive classrooms for special software training workshops involving participants from several types of businesses and government organizations.

The Business School had one of the first interactive classrooms in the country – completed in 1993 – so we knew the importance of such classrooms in planning for the new building complex. We also knew the pitfalls of using a software system to provide the interactivity, since that is what we used in the original facility. In designing the new structure, there was no question that we needed a hardware-based system to provide the interactive component although we did not specify the actual system until we were within a few months of the planned installation date so we could purchase the most up-to-date and innovative system possible.

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It's a good thing we waited, as this allowed us to meet Dieter Beaugrand at the COMDEX show in Las Vegas and to learn about the Videodidact system. As soon as we saw it, we knew this was the system that would do what we needed. Even better, the cost of this system was about 50% less than we expected to have to spend!

We could not be happier with the results of this decision. The installation was handled by EBS, and it went flawlessly. We had a very tight time frame for the installation because there was only a period of about three weeks between the end of construction and the beginning of Fall classes. The EBS folks were here when they said they would be, did their job quickly and most professionally, and we were up and running right on schedule. EBS has provided excellent support and we have had no problems with the system in spite of the fact that it is in constant use five days a week.

The system is a pleasure to use, and everyone who teaches in these rooms loves what it adds to their teaching effectiveness. They find it effortless to learn how to run this complex classroom using the Videodidact control keyboard, and they are able to make full use of the system in no time. Best of all, the system allows them to integrate complex computer instruction into their classes without having to think about how to make the system do what they need. They can concentrate on what they are teaching rather than on how to operate an overly complex and hard-to-use system. With the Videodidact system, you get the most powerful and flexible switching system available along with the most intuitive interface one could imagine.

Out of all of the new components of our building complex, we have gotten the most inquiries and interest about the Videodidact system. We are proud to have it, and we are proud to tell others about it. If you have any questions about our experiences with EBS or the Videodidact system, I would be happy to talk with you or to host an on-site visit. You might also find the information on our website to be interesting. You can find it at www.bus.olemiss.edu/technology.

Sincerely,



Dr. Del Hawley
Assoc. Dean for Administration
Assoc. Prof. of Finance