



## Case Study: University of Connecticut Co-Generation Plant Improves Ergonomics, Operator Comfort and Efficiency With Evans Consoles Strategy

The University of Connecticut is one of the nation's leading public research universities. Located in Storrs, CT, the main campus is home to over 23,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Since 2000, the university has been renewing, rebuilding and enhancing its campus through a \$2.3 billion, 20-year state investment in its infrastructure through a program known as UConn 2000.

To meet the expanding needs for power and heating on this rapidly growing campus, UConn opened in February 2006 its new state-of-the-art Co-Generation Facility to replace several oil-fired utility boilers and to enable it to meet its own energy needs.

Despite having a newly built facility, the plant had redeployed its original control consoles in the control room and it soon became apparent that this outdated furniture was no longer doing the job.



According to Terry Jackson, Maintenance Manager, their old furniture was making it difficult to maintain and clean their DCS system PC's, while increased temperatures in the room from the PC's was becoming an issue. In addition, the obsolete design did not allow for ergonomic placement of their display screens as they were in fixed positions on top of the console cabinets making viewing of some monitors difficult. Finally, operator leg room was restricted and it had become uncomfortable and awkward to maneuver around the console.

In 2010, working with Revco, UConn Facilities Management began a project to address these nagging problems by replacing their old console furniture. The process started with a meeting in the control room to discuss concepts for the new console, determine the features and components that would be required and to accurately measure the room so detailed drawings could be prepared.

Several concepts of a new layout were submitted to Jackson, and after a few modifications, the final configuration was approved. The product selected for the new control room console was the Evans Consoles Strategy.

"The process was very simple, especially compared to some of the more complex projects we have to deal with here at the CoGen Plant", explained Jackson. "The design was exactly what we were aiming for."

The design not only included the main console but two remote workstations and a small conference table. It was also important that the furniture was finished in the official UConn blue. Thus, Revco located a matching WilsonArt laminate called Atlantis, which was then used on all front, rear and end panels. A complimentary work surface color, Titanium, completed the design.

Shortly after UConn gave their final approval, Evans began manufacturing the Strategy furniture which included completely pre-staging the entire console and workstations on the factory floor prior to shipping to ensure a perfect fit and finish.

"Everything was a lot easier than I expected. I received a call notifying me of the delivery. The product was delivered on time and the installers came fully prepared and ready to do what they had to do", said Jackson. "The modules were very well built and it was a speedy, turnkey process."



Once completed, Jackson and his colleagues loaded the Strategy system with their hardware and positioned the monitors on adjustable monitor arms for optimum viewing by the operators.

“The ergonomics are much better. It’s more comfortable”, said Jackson. “I like the clean design. All wires, modules and switch gear are tucked in and hidden from view yet fully functional and accessible from the back.”



As part of the overall design, UConn also chose to place all of the PC’s in a remote cabinet outside the control room. This allowed for easier maintenance of the equipment and better thermal management.

When asked whether their new Strategy console has improved operations, Jackson explained that the operators are now more alert and in tune with their screens. “An operator can see all of the screens more easily, especially in the center console area, by angling screens in toward themselves. They could not do that before as the monitors were fixed. This means less movement is required do their job as they can easily see most of the screens

from one location compared to the old system where they would have to roll down eight feet to get to a different screen.”

Jackson continued to say that he would absolutely use Revco and Evan Consoles again if he needed to design and build another control console on campus.

“Quality on both ends. We haven’t had one complaint and actually, it made me look great. Management saw the end product and they were very pleased with the aesthetics and functionality”, said Jackson, who has since been promoted to Maintenance Manager of the Cogeneration Plant. “That was one of the first projects I handled as a shift supervisor and it started something good on my end”.

Jackson said he would definitely recommend an Evans Consoles product if he were ever contacted by another plant looking for advice on console furniture. “It is a very well-built, robust product”, concluded Jackson.



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