

# EMS Case Study TIAA-CREF



## Background

The Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association - College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF) is the pension system market leader, managing the accounts of 2.3 million participants and 12,000 member institutions. In total, the organization ranks among the Fortune 100, based on assets under management.

TIAA-CREF employs more than 6,000 people working in 30 offices throughout the country. The company has approximately 300 meeting rooms, 150 of which are grouped and managed as conference centers in New York, Denver and Charlotte. Hundreds of meetings and events take place in these conference centers each day, many of them videoconferences between different locations. Each event has different space and resource requirements, ranging from the simplest of setups for a brief staff meeting to a long list of audio/visual equipment, catering and other services needed for a multi-site videoconference.

## Complex Scheduling with an Inefficient Program

TIAA-CREF needed a more sophisticated software package to accommodate the detailed scheduling process for the New York and Denver offices. The scheduling software they had been using had a number of flaws. For example, it did not provide immediate feedback on room availability. Sometimes it took more than 30 minutes to find an appropriate venue for a single meeting.

The system did not allow users to simultaneously reserve multiple rooms for an event, reporting was similarly inefficient and the system could not provide a daily or monthly schedule of events that would be available via the internet. Ultimately it was decided that these types of issues could only be addressed by switching to an entirely new event management software program.

TIAA-CREF put together a team of key decision makers to select software more appropriate for their growing scheduling needs. The team consulted managers, reservationists, employees and department heads to create a comprehensive list of features needed in an event management software package.

## Fast Facts

- **EMS products** replace slow, unreliable scheduling system
- **Hundreds** of meetings and videoconferences daily in 30+ locations
- **Virtual EMS** decreases help desk calls from 2000/month to 39/month

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Their collective needs were diverse: managers desired a package that would create statistical reports to track room utilization; reservationists and employees needed software that would allow for rapid room scheduling; the A/V department wanted a detailed inventory of available equipment and a way to track the equipment requirements for meetings and events. Most importantly, everyone wanted a system that could meet their needs now and in the future. As a result, the team sought an event management program that was powerful, flexible and adaptable.

## Increased Productivity and More Time for Customer Service

The selection committee decided on EMS Professional. Then, when a new facility was opened in Charlotte, North Carolina, the company upgraded to EMS Enterprise and later to EMS Workplace. And in the course of these upgrades, TIAA-CREF added the Virtual EMS web access component. According to TIAA-CREF's Event Planning and Facilities Services Manager, EMS has greatly improved the process of reserving meeting space and allocating resources. "EMS is truly phenomenal. Dean Evans & Associates helps our team schedule very efficiently because their software is so easy to use. It has saved us countless hours since we installed it, and our staff is extremely pleased with the way it functions."

Implementing EMS has allowed TIAA-CREF to allocate fewer staff to event planning and event maintenance tasks, significantly increase productivity, reduce overtime and create more time for customer

service.

## Evolving Software for Ever-Expanding Operations

As TIAA-CREF's scheduling needs have grown, so has their use of EMS. Recently they began to fully utilize the catering functions in the system. Menu details, food and beverage service orders and catering-related billing data are now being maintained in the database, allowing more effective and efficient communication between TIAA-CREF and catering providers.

The company also expanded its use of Virtual EMS. Authorized users can now submit space requests or enter reservations directly into the EMS database. This has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of paid calls to the company's outsourced help desk, which also handles room bookings: from 2000 per month to under 40 per month.

TIAA-CREF's need for state-of-the-art technology to manage its ever-expanding event scheduling operations, and Dean Evans & Associates' commitment to continually refining and enhancing its products has been an ideal match. The future is bright for this mutually beneficial business relationship.

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For more information on Dean Evans & Associates, and the company's event and meeting management software products, go to [www.dea.com](http://www.dea.com) or contact the Sales department at [sales@dea.com](mailto:sales@dea.com) or 1.800.440.3994 ext. 863.

