UNIVERSITY OF ST FRANCIS

Executive Summary

Industry

- Higher Education

Environment

- 1,500-2,000 users on the network
- 13 full-time IT staff, 1 CIO, 2 network administrators
- Outdoor APs, expectation for pervasive wireless access
- Multiple geographically disparate locations

Prior Technology Needs

- Weak security posture
- Strong need to extend network infrastructure
- Policies implemented at the network edge were vital to directing traffic and keeping assets secure

Extreme Solution Components

- ExtremeWireless™
- ExtremeSwitching™
- Extreme Management Center™

Results

- Faster decision making
- Network interoperability
- Instant Return on Investment

University of St. Francis Fits New Science Building with State-of-the-Art Network Equipment

The University of St. Francis is a small university located in Joliet, Illinois, serving more than 3,900 students. The University is consistently ranked among the best when it comes to quality education, affordability, and accessibility. One of their notable strengths is the technology made available to students, faculty and staff.

"We're a small university, and one of our fortes has always been the technology that we've been able to offer to our students, faculty, and staff," said Mark Snodgrass, Director of Network Support Services.

USF was focused on extending their network infrastructure to optimize the availability of technology to students and faculty through wireless, particularly in consideration of the increasing predominance of BYOD and IoT. Given the computing-intensive environment, it was time to enhance the network and strengthen the overall security posture.

Extending the Network for Growth

As the university was growing, and with a new, state-of-the-art science building in need of connectivity, extending network infrastructure to accommodate for changing needs was key to the success of St. Francis, its students, and its staff.

The University of St. Francis was already an Enterasys user. After the Extreme Networks Enterasys acquisition, and reviewing the promising product roadmap, IT decision makers felt that relying on Extreme would be a logical progression for their network.

Sights Set on Complete Refresh

Recently, the college built a brand-new science building. Since a hardware refresh across the entire infrastructure was impending, they chose to exclusively use Extreme products in the science building to pave the way toward integrating Extreme from the network core to the edge.

"The new science building is an extension of our current infrastructure, which obviously has high computing demands. We needed to make sure that configuration, implementation and policies across the infrastructure were going to be integrated from the environment we already had easily," Snodgrass explained.

Since the science building was an extension of the current, computing-intensive infrastructure, the IT team at St. Francis needed to ensure that the configuration and implementation of policies were properly pushed across the infrastructure seamlessly from the existing environment.

Implementation of a More Stable Network

Once St. Francis chose to partner with Extreme, the team began by identifying and educating staff on which Extreme solutions would be comparable to their previous solutions. In recognition that Extreme Networks offers a high-quality product line, they selected the wireless access points and switches that would support their network infrastructure.

The implementation process went smoothly, resulting in a stable network and better empowered network administrators.

The university was able to double their number of distinct, physical locations from 2 to 4 without having to increase the number of staff. Snodgrass attributes this to the network saying, "By having it all tied to the network, you can log-in at one location and then get up and go to another and log-in there and you have all of the resources just as if you were sitting at your desk, so there's a lot of interoperability between campuses."

By leveraging the network, onboarding these new facilities, utilizing the network infrastructure for telephony, security, and building automation became easier. Additionally, the IT team recognized an instant return on investment by putting in the data infrastructure for the computing piece of the university because they did not have to invest in separate and additional wiring for the building automation. By bringing these facilities online there was an automatic reduction in expenses.

Thanks to the new network, the University of St. Francis is better equipped to make decisions faster. Having all technologies closely tied to the network will make it easier to expand in the future.

"What made an impression on me was the fact that I was concerned about the interoperability with our legacy equipment. The Extreme engineering team demonstrated to us that their products would connect and work seamlessly with the network assets we already had installed."

Mark Snodgrass
Director of Network Support Services

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