

SUNY COLLEGE AT OLD WESTBURY EXPANDS PORTFOLIO OF ALCATEL-LUCENT PRODUCTS TO ENHANCE CAMPUS EXPERIENCE



CASE STUDY

MARKET: **EDUCATION**

REGION: **NORTH AMERICA**



SUNY College at Old Westbury is a dynamic and diverse public liberal arts college that fosters academic excellence through close interaction among students and faculty staff. In an environment that cultivates critical thinking, empathy, creativity and intercultural understanding, the university looked to develop their educational resources by enhancing their wireless capacity to deal with the increase in student owned technology.

THE CHALLENGE

Possessing a network infrastructure that rivals many commercial enterprises, State University of New York (SUNY) College at Old Westbury is home to a sophisticated environment that delivers secure services to the College's 3,300 students and 120 faculty members. The College's Chief Information Officer, Marc Seybold, has a passion for harnessing technology to provide a secure environment that promotes learning and is simultaneously conducive to enhancing the full Old Westbury College experience.

Seybold recalls, "When I arrived 10 years ago, we created an architecture that was flexible and scalable to meet the College's evolving needs. Since then, we've witnessed a massive spike in wireless use; converging technologies have lead to security-related components needing to be integrated into the network, and we've seen escalating threats from malware and cyber-based attacks. Our latest research showed that rather than having one monolithic domain, using higher levels of network granularity and limiting membership in device pools, gives much better results."

Several approaches were considered that ultimately proved to not to be viable. Seybold explains, "A large number of devices like student-owned laptops meant client-based solutions just weren't practical to implement; people don't like anything unfamiliar being placed on their machines. Also, many solutions only support a very limited number of devices. We quickly realized that we had to find a way to control access that didn't involve doing anything on individuals' machines."

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Marc Seybold, Chief Information Officer, SUNY College at Old Westbury

To address the situation, the College implemented a solution based on the IEEE 802.1X standard, to create an autonomous authentication mechanism to police any devices seeking to attach to the network.

A long-time user of Alcatel-Lucent products, the College opted for dual OmniSwitch™ 9700 switches coupled with the OmniSwitch 6850s and 6900s to enable them to rapidly establish individual device pools. Categories included single broadcast domains for specialized devices that may have specific security needs or some level of external access, such as access to a VPN or remote dialup for example.

The Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch 6850/6900s are connected into the OmniSwitch 9700 core, which provides a 20Gb backbone – with dual redundant legs – in a ‘collapsed star’ configuration to provide throughput, resiliency and plenty of bandwidth for the College.

An increase in the number of cloud hosted applications has further raised requirements. Seybold comments, “The majority of our back-end systems are cloud-based and they require a robust and high-performance infrastructure to minimize disruptions. A small blip can potentially impact hundreds, maybe thousands, of people’s applications.

“I’m really excited about the OmniSwitch 6900’s virtual chassis capabilities. The single chassis approach makes everything simpler; it appears like a single switch from a management and reliability point of view. Failover is almost instantaneous and, together with the incremental raw performance, disruptions to cloud-based applications will be practically non-existent.”

Seybold continues, “We have created a lab environment to allow everyone on campus to get a sense of the products we are contemplating deploying. It’s really good validation to see a large uptake in interest when we introduce new devices into this test facility. We recently evaluated the Alcatel-Lucent 8100 series WLAN handsets in the lab. As part of the assessment, I took a handset and walked into each building on campus. Even though none of the buildings are designed to provide outside Wi-Fi coverage, I never lost the signal. I was impressed.” Since that evaluation, the College has purchased and implemented over 100 Alcatel-Lucent Voice over LAN handsets.

The relationship between SUNY College at Old Westbury and Alcatel-Lucent has spanned many years. “In addition to the quality of products one of the things that has kept us as a customer over the years is the quality of the support we’ve received,” reflects Seybold. “With the level of sophistication and complexity of today’s network and communications solutions, you will always experience situations where things don’t quite go according to plan. What I tell everyone is that ‘doing the right thing’ has to be engrained in the corporate culture – this is just invaluable and it’s what I get from Alcatel-Lucent.”

CUSTOMER SUMMARY

Customer Name: SUNY
URL: www.oldwestbury.edu/
Industry: Education
Number of Users: 3,300 students and 120 faculty members

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