

3 ways managed services can enhance campus IT



Doing more with less has become almost a cliché. Yet, for many campus IT employees, it is simply business as usual.

When choosing a college or university, in today's highly competitive academic environment, students are looking for dependable, ubiquitous wireless connectivity.

The reliability of campus WiFi is a big concern, with 62% of students saying they'd like to see it improved and 43% saying it's just somewhat, not very or not at all reliable.¹ Only 20% of students say their campus WiFi is very reliable in all or most places.²

At the same time, campus IT departments have been tasked with implementing and supporting a growing number of technologies in an effort to develop the "smart campus." There are systems for teaching and assessing, analyzing and reporting on student success, monitoring and securing campus facilities and more. Campus IT staff must make sure these various systems work together seamlessly in order to drive continuous improvement.

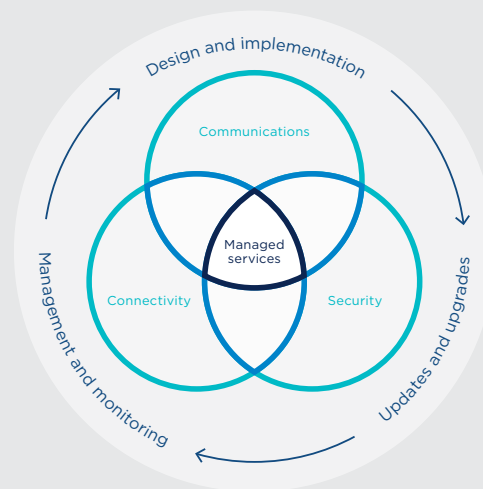
With each new system that is added, there is rarely a proportional increase in IT resources. The IT departments at many colleges and universities are chronically understaffed, and this affects their ability to integrate and support new technologies.

Managed services can help solve this challenge, empowering IT staff to truly do more with less.

With managed services, campus IT departments can keep up with rapidly evolving connectivity needs without investing in costly equipment that's quickly obsolete. They can extend the capabilities of their IT staff, allowing team members to focus on more strategic priorities. And they can achieve predictable costs, making it easier to budget for IT needs.

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Freeing resources to focus on teaching, learning and student success



Reliable campus WiFi raises student concerns⁴

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Keep up with modern needs

The connectivity needs of colleges and universities are growing exponentially. The average student brings multiple digital devices with them to campus, including laptops, cell phones, gaming devices, smart watches and more — and students have come to expect wireless access on all of them.

Not having reliable, fast access to the internet is frustrating to students, whether they're in class, in the library or outdoors. Just 20% of respondents say campus WiFi is very reliable in all or most areas, and 37% say it's very reliable in some areas (such as in buildings).³

Rising expectations are challenging campus IT departments to keep up with increasing demands. In response, many campus leaders are upgrading their WiFi infrastructure every few years.

Purchasing and installing network equipment locks colleges and universities into using the same technology for at least three to five years, and maybe more. If leaders have planned wisely and correctly anticipated their future needs, that might be fine. But even then, institutions might be paying for more capacity than they need initially.

A managed approach to network technology allows campus leaders to invest in a solution that matches their current demands but can easily expand to accommodate future requirements.

Instead of owning equipment that might become obsolete in a few years, leaders can be secure in the knowledge that they'll always have access to the latest technology — and a solution that meets their exact needs at any given time.



A growing number of colleges and universities are looking to managed network services as a solution to rapidly expanding connectivity needs.

Extend the capabilities of IT staff

Colleges and universities face many challenges in staffing their IT departments. Tight budgets frequently prevent them from hiring the full cadre of employees they need to support IT effectively. Even when they do add more staff, they're often competing with the private sector for top talent, making recruitment and retention more difficult. In light of these challenges, campus IT departments often have trouble adequately meeting all their needs.

A survey from the higher-education technology group EDUCAUSE revealed that campus IT employees are feeling overworked and underresourced. Nearly half of respondents (48%) said the pandemic affected the size of their IT workforce: "We are really feeling the loss," one IT leader said. "The service backlog is growing."⁵

Managed network services can reduce the burden on overextended IT departments. With a managed solution, knowledgeable and highly qualified experts are available 24/7/365 to maintain, support and troubleshoot. This allows institutions to keep their networks running smoothly without having to commit their own IT personnel.

In fact, a managed solution allows colleges and universities to redeploy IT resources to address other strategic priorities they rarely have time for.

Challenges of in-house IT staffing

Shortage of qualified applicants

74% of campus leaders said hiring or IT employees has been a moderate or serious problem in 2023.⁶

Salary constraints

Few higher-education institutions can match the IT salaries and benefits offered in the private sector.

Lack of training for IT staff

Many colleges and universities struggle to provide IT staff with adequate training and upskilling opportunities.

Benefits of using outside talent

A pool of talented professionals

Working with a managed services provider gives you immediate access to an on-demand pool of IT experts, ensuring that services are never under-supported.

An extension of your team

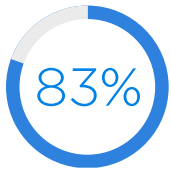
Managed service experts act as extensions of an institution's IT team, helping to acquire advanced skills at a fraction of the cost.

Advanced training and certifications

When you entrust your network services to a qualified provider, you rest assured their staff is always equipped with the latest industry knowledge and certifications.

Achieve predictable costs

Budgeting for technology is always a top challenge for colleges and universities, and that's especially true in the wake of the global pandemic. Taking a managed approach to network services can help campus leaders budget more effectively by trading unpredictable, intermittent IT expenses for fixed and regular monthly costs that are easier to plan around.



of organizations that shifted to managed IT services saved money.⁷

Traditionally, campus IT departments have purchased and installed network technologies through large capital expenditures. The downside to this approach is that strategic IT planning can become contingent on the availability of new funding. As a result, institutions might be stuck with outdated equipment until they can raise the new capital they need for a network refresh cycle.

A managed services approach can support more stable and consistent IT budgeting. This helps campus IT leaders successfully predict and manage their network expenses, including the cost of routine maintenance. There are no more unpleasant surprises when a piece of equipment fails; no more scrambling to find the money to replace an aging router or wireless access point.

That's good news for campus leaders who are increasingly worried about budgeting for connectivity and their network. Managed services not only reduce risk and increase budget stability; they can even shrink overall costs. According to one source, 83% of organizations that shifted to managed IT services saved money by doing so — and half reduced their IT expenditures by 25% or more.⁸

As colleges and universities struggle to balance their budgets, more and more are discovering that managed network services are the solution to rising network costs.



Managed solutions that meet campus needs

From flexible wide-area networks to wireless connectivity and multiple security options, Spectrum Enterprise® offers a wide range of managed solutions to help colleges and universities build and maintain a secure, reliable network infrastructure from a single, trusted provider.



Enterprise Network Edge

Improve the network experience for your institution when scalability, performance and flexibility are paramount to your campus. Powered by Fortinet, the solution simplifies IT operations by providing SD-WAN, security and optional switching in a multi-cloud-ready platform. It brings together connectivity, equipment and network management to support hybrid networks, students, faculty and staff.



Managed Network Edge

Simplify the deployment and management of your institution's network with this modular, all-in-one solution. Delivered over the Cisco Meraki platform, Managed Network Edge offers security, routing, SD-WAN, WiFi, switching, smart cameras, environmental sensors and the ability to work from anywhere there is an internet connection. Achieve flexibility and scalability with connectivity, equipment and network management from a single partner.



Managed Router Service

Efficiently route traffic and improve bandwidth use without investing in hardware or day-to-day management.



DDoS Protection

Help protect your network from malicious volumetric attacks designed to overload a network and prevent access to campus applications, systems and information with our world-class distributed denial of service (DDoS) threat identification and mitigation.



Unified Communications

Answer communication and collaboration needs for your educators and staff with a fully managed cloud-based voice solution that brings together calling, messaging, meetings, virtual workspaces and more in a single application that delivers a unified experience for today's mobile, on-the-go faculty, staff and student body.

Turn to a proven partner you can trust

With Spectrum Enterprise, you don't just get a technology vendor, you get a proven partner who can meet all your connectivity needs. As your provider of managed services, we offer a nationwide, extensive, modern fiber network; a highly qualified team of IT professionals; local support teams; and a 4-hour target time to restore services, backed by a 99.99% service-level agreement (SLA), one of the best in the country.

Extensive higher education experience

Spectrum Enterprise has dedicated education experts helping hundreds of colleges and universities nationwide plan and realize their IT vision.

Top-notch talent working for you

We recruit and train highly qualified network technicians, acting as an extension of your IT team to help you keep pace with the speed of innovation. Our network experts hold a collective 1,400 IT certifications, with specialists on call — freeing your staff to focus on more strategic IT initiatives.

24/7/365 protection

We work around the clock to keep your network running smoothly and protect you from the latest cyberthreats, so teaching, learning and campus administration can continue uninterrupted by network downtime.

To learn more about how Spectrum Enterprise managed services can help your institution, visit enterprise.spectrum.com/highered.

1. Nancy Mann Jackson, "[Where the Tech Troubles Are](#)," Inside Higher Ed, October 31, 2022.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Jenay Robert, "[Smaller and Restructured: How the Pandemic Is Changing the Higher Education IT Workforce](#)," EDUCAUSE, May 23, 2022.
6. Megan Zahneis, "[Higher Ed's Hiring Challenges Are Getting Worse](#)," Chronicle of Higher Education, March 31, 2023.
7. "[The Cornerstones of IT Managed Services](#)," Entech, July 3, 2023.
8. Ibid.

About Spectrum Enterprise

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