

Case Study

Seminole State College of Florida

Multi-Campus College Makes Affordable Upgrade to Genetec IP Access Control



Rapidly Growing Student Body Prompts College to Standardize on Genetec Unified Security Platform across Multiple Sites and Centralize IP Video and Access Control Monitoring within Budget

Business Challenge

Seminole State College of Florida offers more than 190 degrees and programs and has more than 32,000 students. Opening in 1966 with a few portable classrooms, the College now encompasses six sites spanning Seminole County, including campuses in Sanford/Lake Mary, Oviedo, Heathrow and Altamonte Springs.

Recognizing efficiency in working from a single unified platform, Seminole State had previously invested in an access control system that also offered a video surveillance component. After a few years, instabilities of the platform caused security vulnerabilities and hampered IT resources. The video surveillance system also became costly, requiring expensive server processing to manage a small quantity of cameras.

While the unified aspect remained central to their decision, Seminole State College decision makers wanted a more reliable security platform that would allow for affordable and gradual growth. In their search, they turned to SiteSecure, a local IP-based security solutions integrator, that proposed Genetec Security Center, the unified security platform. Security Center unifies IP video surveillance and access control in one easy-to-use solution.

\$65,000 Savings Becomes Catalyst to Access Control Upgrade

According to Bill McCoy, Senior Network Analyst at Seminole State, “The main reason for choosing Security Center was that it was cost effective. Not only were we able to drastically reduce our hardware costs by moving to a virtualized server environment, but we were also able to install the Synergis Master Controller (SMC) to preserve our existing access control hardware. The SMC was the driver in our access control upgrade from a budget standpoint.”

The initial pilot project of the Synergis access control upgrade began within the IT building at the Sanford/Lake Mary campus. Designed as an open controller, a single SMC was connected to a third-party module, allowing the college to modernize its

Summary

Client name: Seminole State College of Florida

Organization size: 1,600 employees

Industry: Higher Education

Location: Florida, USA

Products: Security Center, Omnicast, Synergis, Synergis Master Controller

Partners: SiteSecure, Axis Communications, HID Global

door security without having to undergo a full system “rip-and-replace.” Fourteen doors were connected to the new intelligent controller, which relayed door activity and events to the Synergis access control system within Security Center.

Seminole State College has since extended Synergis to buildings at the Oviedo campus, where the system was completely overhauled with new HID Global readers and controllers. The phase-over for the remaining 320 doors across all campuses will begin shortly with more SMCs. Upon project completion, the savings on door hardware using the Synergis Master Controller is estimated at approximately \$65,000.

“Another great advantage of Synergis has been the ability to choose any hardware that we want,” McCoy added. “With Security Center, we are no longer locked into a vendor or supplier.”

Centralized Management Simplifies Multi-Campus Security

The pilot project proved to be successful from a monetary perspective and the system’s centralized management capabilities have also helped to streamline IT and security tasks across all campuses at Seminole State College. Thanks to a dedicated fiber

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optic network that is leased from Seminole County, all access control data and video from the four campuses is sent back to the main campus servers, where the IT and security departments can manage cardholders, change rules, view video and more.

Features, such as partitioning, have helped the college group cameras and doors based on their location, making it easy to sift through and quickly find information. Advanced granularity for user privileges, cardholder permissions and door scheduling also help ensure that only the staff requiring rights will inherit the necessary system or access privileges.

“During the holidays or special events, our opening hours change, and IT managers need to be able to change the door schedules to accommodate. The depth of granularity in Synergis has provided local autonomy to our IT managers at various campuses, while allowing key IT staff at Sanford/Lake Mary campus to centrally manage the system,” McCoy explained.

Expanding Efficiency with Additional Functionality

Once all doors have been moved over to the Synergis access control system, Seminole State College plans to investigate other time-saving features, such as Plan Manager for map-based navigation and alarm management, mobile apps for quick access to information on-the-go, and Threat Levels for automated facility lockdown during emergencies.

Since the Seminole County has standardized on Genetec at their state-of-the-art public safety complex and other municipal facilities; this has opened discussions to merge all systems countywide within one platform. The Genetec Federation feature will allow Seminole State College to easily provide first responders with access to their system to improve situational awareness in the event of an emergency.

According to McCoy, Seminole State is extremely satisfied with its upgrade to Security Center: “We have seen ROI in this investment—there has been a huge boost in efficiency, less maintenance and less server downtime. From an IT standpoint, Security Center is a much more robust platform that provides us the freedom to cost-effectively modernize and grow our security system, without restrictions.”



Infrastructure at a Glance

Seminole State College chose a mix of IP cameras from Axis Communications, including the AXIS M32 series and AXIS P33 series Network Cameras, totalling over 300 cameras spread through indoor and outdoor locations. Existing door hardware has been preserved with the use of the Synergis Master Controller, while doors at the Oviedo campus are outfitted with HID Global multiCLASS® readers and VertX® V1000 controllers and V100 modules. Seminole State College leases fiber optic strands from the Seminole County to facilitate a dedicated network between campuses, allowing for video to either stream continuously or on motion back to two virtual servers with 6TB at the Sanford/Lake Mary campus. Video retention is set to 45 days.

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