



## **Urbana University Increases Student Enrollment, Satisfaction With Cisco Deployment**

Urbana University is a private liberal arts university offering associate, baccalaureate, and masters degrees to its 1500 students. Founded in 1850, the beautiful 128-acre campus is located in Urbana, Ohio.

Robert Head, president of Urbana University, was concerned about the inadequate state of the university's communication technology. Five of the 21 campus buildings were networked together using long-reach Ethernet and dialup Internet access. Students had to go into computer labs for Internet access, and each business unit within the university worked independently with autonomous phone systems.

“Overall, we lacked connectivity of onsite facilities and, to any significant reliable manner, connectivity to the outside world,” says Head. “Our inadequate level of technology was hampering teaching, learning, and the opportunity for operational efficiencies and recruiting.” Head and other university leaders knew that the students were clamoring for high-speed Internet access and wireless network access in dorms and open campus areas.

The university contracted with NetGain Information Systems, a Cisco® Certified Premier Partner, which holds a Cisco Systems® specialization in Cisco IP Communications and has developed a focused business practice on the needs of the higher education market. The firm specializes on network infrastructure and has experience in IP telephony and voice over IP (VoIP) that began in 1999.

“Solutions from other firms were beyond the financial capabilities of Urbana University,” Head says. “NetGain proposed a solution that included Cisco products that was one-third the cost of other potential suppliers. The fact that NetGain is a Cisco partner was highly beneficial. I felt that with NetGain and Cisco we had the best opportunity for current and future success.”

The design phase for the project included working with engineers from Corning Fiber and Cisco to modify the plans and specifications of the original consultant. NetGain then built a fiber-optic backbone and added horizontal cabling to all buildings on campus. The next phase involved adding switching and routing to the network, and the final phase was completing rollouts of Cisco IP telephony applications and Cisco Unity® voice mail, as well as campus wide e-mail and Web services.

“Our biggest challenge in this deployment was that the users were so excited about the project that they wanted everything completed at the same time,” says Michael Minnich, president and CEO of NetGain Information Systems. “We needed to continually



communicate with the major department heads to inform them of the project's progress and timeline." Head says that the NetGain staff did a great job of coordinating with university personnel successfully completed the implementation on schedule.

"This was a large-scale upgrade of their network," says Minnich. "Everyone with whom we worked at the university was appreciative, professional, and flexible, which made for a smooth rollout."

And now with the infrastructure in place and IP telephony and e-mail and Web services deployed, Urbana University is already seeing big returns on its investments.

"The immediate benefit is to the reputation of the university," says Head. "This is generated by student satisfaction with the new technological capabilities. The faculty, staff, students, and administration can communicate frequently and in new ways, whether they are on or off campus. Enrollment has increased, as has our retention of students. We continue to derive more benefits than I originally imagined."

The new Cisco network has allowed the university to save on local telephone and dialup services while enhancing productivity. Head and his team are also looking to the future, planning on additional networked software to deliver even greater efficiencies in administration and operations.

NetGain sees its clients reaping the benefits of IP on a daily basis. "Remotely provided IP-based services are one of the largest growth areas in the industry," says Minnich. "Our business model is focused on IP telephony, security, and wireless, based on experience in remote IP services since 1996 and in IP telephony since 1999. This depth of experience enables us to make entrances into a company much easier; and to obtain results unmatched by our competition."

To learn how NetGain can optimize your business for success, please contact us.

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