

Achieving top honors in campus safety with Axis.

Benedictine University earns state-wide recognition for excellence in campus security with Axis network cameras and video encoders.



Organization:
Benedictine University

Location:
Lisle, Illinois, USA

Industry segment:
Education

Application:
Campus safety and security

Axis partners:
Convergent Technologies,
OnSSI, Dell

Mission

With parents of incoming students expressing ever-higher expectations for campus safety, Benedictine University has worked hard to earn its ranking as one of the safest four-year private institutions in the state of Illinois. In fact, the ranking serves as a great recruitment tool. But to maintain its best practices, the university continues to seek out the latest advances in video surveillance technology to help its peace officers respond more quickly to routine and emergency calls across its campus.

Solution

Since 2007, Convergent Technologies, a Schaumburg, IL-based security integrator and Axis partner, has worked with the university to strategically deploy Axis cameras across the suburban Chicago campus. As technology progressed, they took full advantage of features such as HDTV-resolution, H.264 compression, WDR, low-light color fidelity and 360° field-of-view.

Axis cameras are managed by an OnSSI VMS that integrates with the university's Lenel OnGuard® Card Access system as well as the campus emergency response and public address systems. Convergent also integrated a number of legacy analog cameras into the surveillance network with Axis video encoders.

Result

In addition to serving as a force multiplier for routine service calls, the Benedictine University police department has integrated Axis network cameras and video encoders into its emergency preparedness program to assist officers in informing and protecting students, faculty and staff of severe weather conditions and emergency evacuations, as well as coordinating with local law enforcement during active shooter drills.

“With an active campus of over 10,000 students and special events that can draw an additional 4,000 people and their vehicles, there’s no way we could handle all the routine calls we receive without our Axis cameras.”

Michael Salatino, Chief of Police, Benedictine University.

Meeting community expectations for campus security

As Benedictine University Chief of Police Michael Salatino can attest, parents and students have grown much more sophisticated about campus security. “Even as recently as six years ago, security technology was not really on people’s radar,” Salatino said. “Today, parents tell me they selected our university because the safety and security programs we have in place aren’t being offered by other institutions down the road. It’s pushed us to keep up with the latest security technologies and partner with Convergent to make sure we deploy the best products out there.”

Raising the bar for higher education security

Benedictine University has been accredited by the Illinois Law Enforcement Accreditation Program for its safety and security initiatives and was ranked as the safest four-year private institution in the state of Illinois in 2011.

With 14 state-certified peace officers and eight para-professionals keeping watch over 10,000 students on the 108-acre campus, an advanced video security system was essential to achieving that level of success.

“Our Axis video surveillance system definitely extends the range of our university police force. We wouldn’t be able to operate as effectively as we do without it,” Salatino said.

For instance, Convergent installed an AXIS Q6035-E PTZ Dome Network Camera along a busy walkway between four buildings. The ultra-fast PTZ control gives the police department the ability to track activity and zoom in instantly when an incident occurs.

In the library, with its multiple points of entry and atrium-style architecture, Convergent installed a 360°, five-megapixel AXIS M3007-PV Network Camera to achieve panoramic view of the area. “My field of view has been increased tenfold,” Salatino said. “If I don’t get you coming in, I’m going to get you going out.”

Convergent also network-enabled a number of legacy analog cameras in the campus parking garage with six-channel AXIS Q7406 Video Encoder Blades. Now, the university police can manage all their cameras remotely from a single VMS.

From solving petty theft to managing campus-wide alerts

Campus police monitor the Axis cameras 24/7. The system has proved invaluable for emergency preparedness and helps the university respond immediately to incidents ranging from severe weather alerts to active threats. The cameras are also tied into a separate Emergency Operations Center, which allows administrators to keep continual watch over the campus while Police Dispatch handles first response.

If there’s a building evacuation, staff can use the video to coordinate the campus mass communications system. “We can see which way people are walking or running and direct them over the campus public address system on which way to go,” Salatino said.

The IT department archives video for 30–45 days on rack mounted Dell PowerEdge multi-processor servers. To conserve bandwidth and storage, Convergent programmed the cameras to increase frame rate and resolution on motion detection. This helps security staff quickly resolve incidents. For example, if an expensive pair of jeans goes missing from the laundry room, police can easily check the video to see if another student had mistakenly grabbed the wrong clothes. The university police also use the cameras in conjunction with card readers to watch out for dorm trespassers.

“At Benedictine University, security isn’t an afterthought,” said Matt LaRue, Account Executive at Convergent Technologies. “It’s forethought.”

