Making a bold move away from traditional IT, Broward College embraces its Cloud First vision as a driver of student success.

BROWARD SM
COLLEGE

Challenges

- Staff acquisition and retention
- Network management and funding for infrastructure, servers, and storage
- Better quality wireless connectivity with broader coverage on campus

Solutions

- Managed IT Services for support and maintenance of network, storage, and servers
- Wireless enhancements including access point replacements and Network Access Control
- Network remediation to address reliability issues
- Hyperconverged infrastructure to enable throughput and data center redundancy
- Security enhancements
- Private cloud

Benefits

- Improved infrastructure performance and service level compliance
- Better insight into network remediation opportunities
- Strong foundation to build incrementally toward Cloud First vision
- Positioned as thought leader and innovator in the education industry

For more information:
www.broward.edu

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Technology Solutions
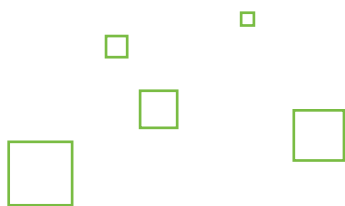
Serving more than 63,000 students annually, Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based Broward College provides students with certificate programs, two-year university-transfer degrees, two-year career degrees, and baccalaureate degrees in selected programs. The mission of the college is to provide high-quality educational programs and services that are affordable and accessible to a diverse community of learners.

Challenge: Staff retention and performance issues make it difficult to meet faculty and student expectations

When you ask Patti Barney, VP Information Technology, Broward College, what her biggest IT challenges were, she takes pause to pinpoint the most significant one. After some thought (and qualifying that there was a myriad of challenges), she singles out staffing.

"It was really hard for us, with the salaries that we could offer as an educational institution, to retain the system engineers who could keep up with the latest technologies. We unfortunately had a revolving door situation, which resulted in reliability and performance issues with several of our key applications," says Barney.

In addition to skills retention, network management and funding were also issues. As an education institution, infrastructure, storage, and server management are not part of the core mandate or mission. However, Broward College IT was spending inordinate amounts of time on those operational tasks, at the expense of more strategic student and faculty-focused initiatives.

And wireless demands were growing. Every year, students lamented quality and coverage. The network team would assess what was feasible fiscally, but any incremental enhancements still didn't meet student expectations.

"At the end of the day, we are here for the students. If what we are doing in IT isn't benefiting them and the faculty, then we need to reprioritize," says Barney. It got to a point where stakeholders became used to accepting a certain level of pain when trying to get things done. That was the breaking point for Barney. "No-one at the College should have to tolerate anything less than stellar performance and reliability. It was time to make some changes and shift what business Broward College IT was in."

PRODUCTS LIST

HPE SimpliVity

Aruba ClearPass

Aruba Access Points

Proofpoint End Point Protection

SERVICES

CSPi Vital™ Private Cloud

CSPi Vital™ Wireless-as-a-Service

CSPi Vital™ Monitoring and Management Services

CSPi Professional Services

Vision: Cloud First to enable students to succeed

Broward College's mission is concise and clear – help students succeed. IT was not completely aligned to that mission. Too much time was being spent on IT operations – IT for the sake of IT – rather than face-to-face with students and faculty, helping them use the technology being deployed.

"We had to get very honest with ourselves," says Barney. "We had to stop defending why things weren't working as they should be and using funding as an excuse. Our vision is to move to the cloud. But we had to stop turning a blind eye to the status quo and take greater accountability."

With the Cloud First vision, Barney feels that Broward College IT will be better positioned to enable student success – helping students use technology to gain the technical, analytical, and critical thinking skills needed for the workforce.

By transitioning to expertly managed, state-of-the-art equipment, faculty and students will have the applications and performance they need for optimal teaching and learning. In addition, Barney and her executive peers can begin to contemplate digital education delivery, advancing the experience of learning for students.

"The industry recognizes Broward College as a thought leader and innovator for what we are doing in IT."

Solution: **An incremental journey toward the IT vision with cloud-based managed hosting**

Infrastructure performance, network management, and skills retention were the first challenges that Barney addressed. She believed that fixing that foundation would lay strong groundwork for future change and enhancements.

Barney engaged CSPi for Vital™ Managed IT Services, entrusting its experts with network, storage, and server monitoring and management. CSPi's Network Operations Center (NOC), located in Deerfield Beach, Florida, is providing Broward College with 24/7/365 proactive support and dedicated staff. CSPi established escalation levels and instituted proper service levels for this engagement, which has been ongoing for the past year.

Phase Two is targeting the migration of enterprise applications from legacy on-premises infrastructure to CSPI's Vital™ Hosted Private Cloud (built on HPE SimpliVity). In addition to the application migration, Barney will be proceeding with wireless enhancements, leveraging CSPi's Vital™ Wireless-as-a-Service offering. Fully managed, the Wireless-as-a-Service solution will include the replacement of 700 legacy access points and the addition of 400 new Aruba access points to expand and improve coverage. Aruba ClearPass for Network Access Control will also be layered on to better control authorized network access.

Network remediation is also part of Phase Two. While still in the planning and consideration stages, there are several elements comprising this initiative, including:

- Progressive fixes to network design to eliminate reliability issues associated with VLANs and single points of failure for key operational areas including the Security Operations Center.
- Security enhancements including a Proofpoint cloud-based end point protection solution.

"Our goal is to get out of the data center business completely. HPE is a front-runner for us in terms of replacing an aging compute and storage system with a next generation hyperconverged solution built for cloud workloads. With the capabilities that hyperconvergence on HPE SimpliVity can open up for us, we have infinite possibilities in terms of cloud. We also gain the data center quality and redundancy that we crave without exhausting our fiscal and human resources trying to do it on our own," says Barney.

Why CSPi: Shared risk, flexibility, and a tangible, contractual commitment to incremental growth

CSPi's willingness and ability to work with Barney, within the parameters of her unique requirements, cost sensitivities, and execution process, put the company ahead of the others that were bidding on the project.

"As a result of the incremental nature of our IT transformation, we had a lot of undefined future initiatives and a constrained budget," says Barney. "CSPi was so flexible in the contract negotiation process regarding the things we wanted to do but weren't ready to execute on right now. I really value that level of trust and integrity in a partner."

In addition to the flexibility, Barney appreciates the shared risk. When Barney approached her Board, she was able to do so with one contract that detailed all of the potential services, with costs and options, even though she was only proposing execution for the Managed IT Services component.

"I was able to position the relationship strategically to the Board: CSPi is our Managed IT Services provider that will help us achieve our cloud vision when we are ready. The future proofing within the contract, based on our three-year vision, contributed significantly to our trust and confidence in the relationship," says Barney.

CSPi's relationships with several of Broward College's primary vendors, including Microsoft, VMware, EMC, Enterasys, and Aruba were a strong value add for Barney. That familiarity meant that she and her team would not have to invest time or effort in building any new relationships. In addition, she appreciated CSPi's expert-level staff who offered a depth of knowledge that her team needed. She was also encouraged by CSPi's strong relationship with HPE and its deep knowledge of the SimpliVity solution.

"HPE is a front-runner for us in terms of replacing an aging compute and storage system with a next generation hyperconverged solution built for cloud workloads."

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Benefits: Renewed confidence in the viability of the Cloud First vision

Broward College has had CSPi's Managed IT Services solution in its environment for a year. Barney describes the relationship as "very healthy," and appreciates CSPi's willingness to listen and adjust accordingly.

With the Managed IT Services foundation in place, Barney has a sense of renewed confidence that Broward College is finally on the right track. She has better insight into where remediation can deliver the most value and feels optimistic that IT will be able to fully actualize the Cloud First vision, taking the College to the next level.

"With cloud-enabled Managed Hosting, we can start small, grow incrementally, pick the right priorities, work with a partner that can help us readjust our focus, and move intentionally and effectively toward our vision," says Barney.

Broward College's IT transformation isn't only making an impact on its students and faculty. The industry is taking notice too. Making the move away from traditional IT to the cloud is not common in education. Many institutions are typically risk and cost averse.

"The industry recognizes Broward College as a thought leader and innovator for what we are doing in IT," says Barney. She has done presentations for college CIOs, spoken on State of the CIO panels, and Gartner did a case study on Broward's Cloud First strategy. "My message is always the same – Broward College is an educator; our core mission isn't about being in the IT business, it's about being in the education business. We are doing what's necessary in IT to focus on that business and help our students succeed," says Barney.

Learn more about CSPi's Vital™ Managed IT Services at www.cspi.com/it-solutions. Assess the health of your network with a complimentary, non-intrusive network audit. Call 1-866-641-1159 or email cloudservices@cspi.com to book yours today.