

CASE STUDY

OUTSOURCING WI-FI— THE SECRET TO SPEEDY ROLL-OUT AND GREATER STUDENT SATISFACTION

“The student comes first,” is the mantra at James Madison University (JMU), a large public university in Harrisonburg, Virginia. So, when the school’s 20,000 mostly undergraduate students started demanding comprehensive wireless access, JMU listened. With time a critical factor, JMU made the strategic decision to outsource and partnered with Apogee to deliver a complete re-implementation of the campus residential network. The result: JMU saved significant equipment costs, reduced staffing costs, attained excellent connectivity (despite major density challenges) and installed the network quickly and efficiently. Best of all, student complaints about connectivity have become almost non-existent.

“By outsourcing to Apogee, we found a partner that can communicate and has systems in place that we fully leveraged. We are confident that the benefits of our new relationship will position us for the long run. We’re excited about this collaboration now and into the future.”

- Dale B. Hulvey, Assistant Vice President for Information Technology,
and Dick Johnson, Director of Technical Services,
James Madison University

GOALS

JMU was an early adopter of wired internet years ago. But in recent years, the school faced increasing pressure from students and parents to upgrade wireless technology to provide seamless and robust access. This situation worsened with the rise of smartphones.

In addition, parents complained that their students were using up their cellular data plans rapidly and incurring extra charges. JMU decided that outsourcing to a trusted outside partner, instead of handling it in-house, would ensure a speedy rollout and greater student satisfaction, and be the most cost-effective option.

CHALLENGES

- Achieving strategic goal of re-implementing residence hall network to meet students' expectations.
- Overcoming significant density issues to provide excellent connectivity.
- Creating a residential network separate from the administrative network to reduce security threats.
- Completing the install quickly and effectively.
- Ensuring budget stability.

SOLUTIONS

Apogee's tailored solution for JMU included:

- Implementation of a high-speed, stand-alone, student ResNet solution.
- Transferred risk away from the university with built-in replacement costs.
- Increased bandwidth that scales as technologies advance and the university expands.
- Proactive monitoring and troubleshooting.
- Regular refreshes and upgrades.
- 24/7/365 network and student support.

RESULTS

With the cutting-edge network, JMU obtained exceptional results, including:

- Reliable, scalable network deployed in all 28 residence halls.
- Wi-Fi performance exceeding expectations.
- Greater student satisfaction.
- Substantial savings in equipment costs and manpower.
- Help desk calls down 95%.
- Speedy, safe installation.
- Predictable funding model for future innovation.