

Norwich Free Academy secures its open campus

S2 Security solutions control access while preserving campus environment

Summary

Organization

Norwich Free Academy

Location

Norwich, CT, United States

Industry

Education

Systems Integrator

Venture Communications and Security

Challenge

- Enhance security while maintaining an open campus
- Increase visitor management capabilities

Solution

- Integrated S2 system with other security functions
- Implemented credential-based system for control of each building

Results

- Streamlined campus security operations
- Controlled access while preserving campus environment



Challenge

Founded in 1854, Norwich Free Academy (NFA) is an independent high school with a student body of more than 2,300, housed on a 38-acre main campus and a nearby satellite campus. The school is also home to the Slater Memorial Museum, a nationally recognized fine and decorative art museum that is open to the public.

NFA wanted to enhance security and customer service, while preserving its open campus. "We needed to figure out a way to leave the doors open, but also lock them down quickly without going to a computer," explains Steve Bordua of Venture Communications and Security, the systems integrator for the project. "The school also wanted the ability to integrate with its existing video surveillance system."

“Community response to the S2 system is overwhelmingly positive.”

- Al Fecteau
Director of Campus Safety
Norwich Free Academy



Solution

Venture Communications and Security designed the system with an S2 NetBox® Extreme and 14 S2 Network Nodes. The system is integrated with more than 125 IP cameras, several existing analog cameras linked to hybrid recorders, and other key security functions.

NFA wanted to allow public access to the Slater Memorial Museum while designating other floors as private. “We were able to integrate the S2 system with the elevator control,” says Al Fecteau, Director of Campus Safety, Norwich Free Academy. “Now visitors can access the museum without special credentials but cannot reach other floors.”

NFA also eliminated multiple access points to secure campus entry. New visitor check-in stations now provide service at two entry points, and an electronic gate integrated with the S2 system secures a third. The gate is kept closed, but is programmed to open automatically for those with access cards.

The real test was determining how to have an open campus while maintaining security over each building. Campus Safety staff carry multiple credentials, allowing them to lock and unlock doors as needed and to operate during after school programs and special events. In the event of an emergency, one of the credentials enables staff to lock down either an individual building or the entire campus from a single card reader.

Results

With the S2 solution, NFA is able to maintain its traditional open campus environment while enhancing safety and security for students, faculty and visitors. “We’ve managed access so we know who is on campus and why,” explains Fecteau. “Community response to the S2 system is overwhelmingly positive.”

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