

College Creates Safe Residence Hall

Queens College deployed IP-based video surveillance and physical access control solutions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Queens College

- Higher Education
- Flushing, New York
- 20,000 students

Challenge:

- Protect student safety
- Augment security staff with technology
- Minimize IT workload

Solution:

- Installed Cisco Video Surveillance 2000 Series IP Cameras and Cisco Video Surveillance Manager to monitor residence hall entrances, corridors, and parking garage
- Implemented Cisco Physical Access Control solution for entrances and elevators

Results:

- Created safer residence environment
- Reassured students and parents
- Laid foundation for proactive security processes



Challenge

One of ten senior colleges of the City University of New York, Queens College serves 20,000 students on a 77-acre campus. The Princeton Review has featured Queens College in America's Best Value Colleges every year, praising the college for its outstanding academics, generous financial aid packages, and relatively low costs.

A commuter school since it opened in 1937, Queens College planned to open its first student residence hall in August 2009. "Fulfilling our educational mission requires that we maintain a safe, secure, and welcoming environment," says Dr. Joseph Bertolino, vice president for student affairs, Queens College. "When we discussed requirements for the new residence hall, safety and security topped the list."

In an example of a public-private partnership, Queens College engaged Capstone Management to build the residence hall, which houses nearly 500 students. The Queens College IT department would implement and manage the physical security solutions.

"Most campuses use video surveillance as a reactive tool, reviewing video after the incident to see what happened," says Naveed Husain, chief information officer, Queens College. "We wanted to build the foundation for a more proactive approach to security that would accelerate incident detection, increase situational awareness, and automate response." The IT department envisioned a solution that would automatically detect an unattended bag, a particular license plate, or a certain individual, for example, and then automatically initiate actions such as notifying staff.

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—Naveed Husain, Chief Information Officer Queens College

Solution

The new Summit Residence Hall at Queens College is equipped with Cisco® Video Surveillance and Cisco Building Access Control solutions. The security solutions operate over the same IP network used for campus voice and data applications. “We selected the Cisco solution because Cisco is a trusted advisor,” Hussain says. “We are confident that Cisco will introduce safety and security features as campus needs change and technology advances. Also, the Cisco support organization is very responsive, and our staff already has the skills to manage Cisco equipment.”

Residence hall managers use the Cisco Physical Access Control solution to lock and unlock exterior doors, either on demand or according to a schedule. For example, the main entrance is programmed to be unlocked during certain hours on the weekend, when many students return from religious services. Students use a key fob to enter, and the system captures a record of all entry attempts.

At the reception desk, staff can view camera feeds on one monitor and door alarm status on another. If a fire door is opened, which is not allowed except during emergencies, the nearby video surveillance camera immediately begins streaming video. The staffer can identify offenders and remind them of the policy.

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—Dr. Joseph Bertolino, Vice President for Student Affairs, Queens College

Results

Enhanced Student Safety

“Students feel very secure in the residence hall,” says Dr. Sue Henderson, vice president for institutional advancement, Queens College. “It’s not economically possible to have security guards everywhere, and video surveillance provides another set of eyes.”

The residence hall staff has already used the solution to identify students who have propped open the fire doors, which is not allowed and could allow intruders to enter the building. Staff were also able to identify a student who accidentally took someone else’s laundry.

Better Control of Building Access

To facilitate students’ move to the residence hall at the beginning of the fall semester, the residence hall staff opened doors that are ordinarily kept locked. They were able to conveniently turn off all of the door alarms all at once, using Cisco Building Access Control solution. “If there were ever an emergency requiring a residence hall lockdown, we could do that automatically, from any computer,” says Walsh.

Recruiting Advantage

Most students who live in the residence hall are local. The residence hall gives them the traditional residential college experience without the expense and disruption of moving far from home. The security of the residence hall reassures students and their parents. “Security is typically the first question from parents during orientation, so we try to address the issue before the question is asked,” says Dr. Bertolino.



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Walsh concludes, “For those of us responsible for a safe and secure residence experience, the Cisco solution has made our lives a little easier.”

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Next Steps

Now that the physical security platform is in place, the IT department plans to augment it to provide an even safer environment without adding security personnel:

PRODUCT LIST

Network Devices

- Cisco Catalyst® Switches 4506 and 3560

Physical Security

- Cisco Video Surveillance Manager
- Cisco Video Surveillance 2000 Series IP Cameras
- Cisco Physical Access Control Solution

Wireless

- Cisco Wireless Controller 4404-100
- Cisco Aironet® 1250 Series Wireless Access Points

- **Viewing from anywhere:** Authorized people will be able to view video from any campus location with an Internet connection. “Later we might give permission to campus security personnel and local police to view real-time and archived video from off campus,” Hussain says.
- **Video analytics:** An important component of the college’s strategic plan for campus safety and security is to use video analytics to automatically alert staff to anomalous incidents. Types of video analytics that the college is considering include facial recognition, object recognition, and license plate recognition.
- **Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR):** Using the Cisco cameras with LIDAR technology would enable campus security and first responders to view a 3-D model of objects and movement in hallways during emergency situations.
- **Collaboration with outside security organizations:** Queens College is considering augmenting its security staff with an independent campus safety organization. The partner organization would be able to remotely view and control camera feeds and building access controls, accelerating situational awareness and response.

For More Information

To read about Cisco physical security solutions, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/physicalsecurity>.



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