# Florida University Creates New Learning Environment

## Executive Summary

**Lynn University**
- **Industry:** Higher Education
- **Location:** Boca Raton, Florida
- **Number of Campuses:** 2100 students and over 180 faculty members

**CHALLENGE**
- Establish new technical infrastructure for presidential debate
- Help enable virtual and mobile learning environment
- Grow campus and build new business school

**SOLUTION**
- Built debate network and replicated model for university use
- Updated wireless foundation to support new learning devices
- Integrated network with voice and video applications to support modern learning

**RESULTS**
- Executed technically flawless presidential debate for 59 million viewers
- Avoided campus network errors by integrating voice, video, and security features
- Provided 1-to-1 mobile learning program for faculty and incoming freshmen

## Challenge

Throughout its 50-year history, Lynn University (Lynn) in Boca Raton, Florida has taken calculated steps to advance its educational mission, which it calls the "dialogue of learning." Since its inception, Lynn's goal has been for students to absorb and share information through discussion in the classroom. As time progressed, providing content to students through other means, especially those outside of the classroom, became essential to keep up with the modern notion of active learning.

Providing other means of delivering content meant offering digital content and delivering it to students over a mobile platform. A small university, Lynn wanted to develop 1-to-1 program, which meant supplying each student with an iPad. To prepare for this overhaul, Lynn had to engage in rigorous faculty development, technical updates, and most importantly, the establishment of a reliable, fast, secure, and easy-to-manage network environment. In addition, the university planned to build a new building for its growing business school, one that needed to house a modern network.

In November 2011, one more piece was added to Lynn's technical puzzle: the university was selected to host one of the final presidential debates in advance of the 2012 presidential election. Almost immediately, Lynn was notified of the network component requirements and what a school needed to provide for the debate itself. The technical specifications included an isolated network environment, one that would exist completely outside of Lynn's institutional boundaries.

Coupled with Lynn's mission to update its learning infrastructure, the debate preparations threw the university into a complete technical refresh. A blessing in disguise, the debate forced Lynn to accelerate a technical solution that the university could use to meet its educational goals, simply by meeting the standards of the debate site itself. The short-term goals of the debate and the long-term goals of the university were the same: Establish a reliable and redundant network to enhance mobility and wireless functionality.

To meet Lynn's long-term learning goals (move into a mobile environment, establish virtual learning, and build a new campus for its business school) and meet expectations for the debate, the university issued a complex request for proposal (RFP) to several education technology vendors. In the end, only one vendor was able to provide a comprehensive, integrated solution for a high-stakes event and a modern learning environment.

## Solution

When evaluating technical proposals, Chris Boniforti, chief information officer at Lynn, took into consideration both the immediate collaborative environment for the debate and the permanent interactive atmosphere for higher education. "For us, incorporating technology means leveraging materials to meet our academic goals more quickly," says

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## Product List

**SWITCHING/DATA CENTER**
- Cisco Nexus® 7000 Series Switches
- Cisco Catalyst® 2900 Series Switches
- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)

**NETWORK MANAGEMENT**
- Cisco Prime

**SECURITY AND VPN**
- Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliances

**VOICE AND IP COMMUNICATIONS**
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CallManager)

**WIRELESS**
- Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE)
- Cisco Wireless LAN Controllers
- Cisco Access Points

Boniforti. "We are moving toward nontraditional classrooms and ones that embrace new environments. We needed our technology vendor to think the same way."

After an extensive evaluation, Boniforti and the Lynn information technology (IT) team decided on Cisco as its technical partner. "All of our diverse technical requirements, for both the debate and the university, could be done under one umbrella, with one vendor, and that was Cisco." Cisco was able to provide Boniforti and the Lynn IT team with a network environment that could be duplicated after the debate, with physical and Ethernet connections.

Cisco wireless offered enhanced coverage and provided continuous, uninterrupted service in both the debate arena and across the campus. Moving toward a mobile device environment, Lynn also chose Cisco to improve upon traditional wireless models and the wireless deployment that the university had completed seven years prior. Boniforti knew this remodel required not only new technology but a new strategy as well.

The other IT requirement was the growth of a server environment. By adopting the Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®), a converged data center platform, and using VMware, Boniforti was able to develop a "best case scenario" for Lynn that would allow the university to expand its servers at a rapid pace without investing a large sum of money.

In addition, Cisco provided voice management that included over 900 phones implemented for the debate. "It was a complicated and robust type of system that went from switching to call management and other applications," says Boniforti. "We really needed one partner that could do as much as we required."

Another requirement was a security and monitoring system that could be duplicated easily and quickly, which Cisco was able to integrate into the larger network.

"The deciding factor after all of the technical evaluations was the face behind Cisco; the people were the true advantage," says Boniforti. "The products fit our needs, but the people made us feel even more secure and confident in our decision."

Part of Lynn's confidence in Cisco was the ability to replicate the debate technology after the arguments closed. From an integration perspective, using Cisco made it easy for the IT team to plan for enhancements on Lynn's campus after the debate; in fact, the Cisco team and Boniforti worked to configure the debate to mirror Lynn's internal education environment, so that replication would not require extensive modifications.

Technical installations for the debate began in August 2012 and when the debate arrived on October 22, 2012, the Cisco core network environment provided a cohesive and hassle-free platform. After the close of the debate, the IT team installed the same network across Lynn's campus, starting with fiber connectivity. The entire deployment will be completed by February 2013, which means that in total, Lynn would have replicated the environment across its campus in roughly three months.

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## For More Information

- To find out more about Cisco Unified Computing System, go to: http://www.cisco.com/go/ucs.

- To find out more about Cisco wireless solutions, go to: http://www.cisco.com/go/wireless.

- To find out more about Cisco voice solutions, go to: http://www.cisco.com/go/voice.

- To find out more about Cisco video solutions, go to: http://www.cisco.com/go/collaboration.

- To find out more about Cisco security solutions, go to: http://www.cisco.com/go/security.

## Results

After the presidential debate, Lynn reported a challenge-free evening for the staff, thousands of media, the on-campus audience, and approximately 59 million viewers around the world. "The only word that comes to mind when looking back on the debate is 'flawless,'" says Boniforti. "From an IT perspective, the majority of the praise is due to our Cisco solution and the Cisco members that helped us with configuration and support."

During the debate, Boniforti and his team had to make several quick decisions and changes on high-stakes items. Two days before the cameras turned on, the IT team needed to encrypt the wireless network and provide security for the Obama and Romney campaigns. Those changes were made in real time and without issue due to the strength, superiority, and integration of the Cisco® network. In just minutes, Lynn was able to flip a rapidly changed environment.

As thousands of guests and media descended on Boca Raton to hear President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney, Boniforti and his team watched as months of planning and work paid off in full. "I had many media executives (reporters from CNN, the Associated Press, and NBC) comment on how beautifully the evening flowed and how differently things transpired on other sites," says Boniforti. "Because of our superior network, these elite media members had better experiences that they've had even when traveling the world."

Following the debate, Lynn moved forward with plans to mirror the debate network across its campus. Due to its Cisco network refresh, Lynn is committing to a mobile platform environment for all roughly 100 full-time faculty members and incoming freshmen during the fall of 2013. The requirement includes that all freshmen will be expected to use a highly customized iPad that brings Lynn's 1-to-1 program to life. This program will distribute over 700 new devices to students for use in the dormitories, classrooms, and outside of campus walls.

In addition to student benefits, Lynn's faculty will experience a new environment, where they can rely on mobility for instruction. A key component for faculty is writing their new curriculum around the design and accessibility of the new business school, which will include lecture capture and resource-sharing tools, including video. Now embedded into the teaching environment, this benefit would not have been possible without Lynn's new Cisco network.

"If Lynn didn't have the network environment that we now possess, we couldn't even look at new virtual, mobile or interactive learning solutions," says Boniforti. "Working with Cisco has saved our institution dollars by expanding our horizons indefinitely."