

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY SECURES IN-PERSON AND REMOTE LEARNING WITH CHECK POINT



LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY

Customer Profile

Lindenwood University is a private liberal arts university in the U.S.

Challenge

- Migrate from an outsource internet access vendor to in-house control
- Maximize performance and availability of online instruction
- Streamline IT resource utilization

Solution

- Check Point Quantum Security Gateways
- Check Point Identity Awareness
- Check Point R80 Security Management

Benefits

- Gained comprehensive threat protection and prevention for sensitive student data
- Reduced costs and passed savings on to students
- Consolidated management and improved flexibility

"Lindenwood University values our students. It is very important that we allow students access to their Learning Management System platform and to the hybrid class environment that is offered. Check Point has allowed us to protect our student's data while being able to continue to learn through today's global pandemic."

- Brayden Helgen,
Supervisor of IT, Network, and Security, Lindenwood University

Overview

Lindenwood University

Founded in 1827, Lindenwood University is a dynamic four-year institution dedicated to excellence in higher education. Based in St. Charles, Mo., Lindenwood offers more than 100 degree programs through values-centered education, and is renowned for its innovation, entrepreneurship, and dedication to students.

"We maintain a lot of students' personal data that they bring to us. We have to protect this data from outside threats, and we try to do our best."

- Benjamin Ra, Supervisor of Information Technology Systems, Lindenwood University



Business Challenge

Delivering a Superior Education Experience, In Person and Online

The second oldest university West of the Mississippi river, Lindenwood has been serving students for nearly two centuries. The institution offers undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees to individuals studying in person and online. Because technology is the foundation of its educational experiences, Lindenwood views security as integral to all its operations.

"Since the pandemic, we have evolved to be able to offer a hybrid-style educational model to where most students have a choice of either watching class live from their dorm rooms or attending class in person," said Benjamin Ra, Supervisor of Information Technology Systems at Lindenwood University. "We have SaaS products that we use, too, for our learning management system."

"Lindenwood University takes IT security very seriously. It is very important that we give our students the best, most secure experience for their education," added Brayden Helgen, Supervisor of IT, Network, and Security at Lindenwood University.

Online communication and collaboration is the foundation that holds the campus community together. Until recently, internet access for the university's dormitory system had been managed by a third-party provider. When Lindenwood chose to take control of this system, it assumed responsibility for securing it as well. Lindenwood needed to ensure that students in 15 residential halls and hundreds of off-campus houses had consistent access to the learning management system and other on-campus resources, while keeping them safe from threats like phishing emails. Its security solution would also need to support bandwidth-sensitive applications like video streaming, and wireless connectivity for students on the move.

SOLUTION

Keeping Student Data Safe Across the Campus Community

To enable students to safely connect to the educational tools they need, Lindenwood deployed Check Point [Quantum Security Gateways](#), together with Check Point Identity Awareness technology. This, unified solution lets Lindenwood apply maximum security against today's most advanced threats, without compromising performance.

The Check Point solution enabled the university to take more direct control of student internet access and security, while simplifying management tasks. "With the Check Point Quantum Security Gateways, we were able to

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consolidate a lot of different technologies into just one cluster of devices and software blades, in a cost-effective manner," said Ra. "Bringing in the service of the internet and providing the network for our students allowed us to provide a superior experience for the students. We are able to better empathize with our student population, because if they're having an issue, we're having issues too."

The solution proved itself to be especially flexible when the global pandemic arose, enabling the university to support additional remote users. "During the pandemic when we had to move to a hybrid model, we had to make sure that students were able to join their classes from their dorm rooms if they needed to. Check Point allowed us to do that, while providing identity management through the Identity Awareness Software Blade, as stateful inspection and threat prevention," said Ra.

The Lindenwood IT team configured its Check Point Next Generation Security Gateways for seamless failover, to maintain continuity of service and nonstop protection for its network and users.

Applying a single point of control

The ability to centrally manage the solution was essential, and Check Point R80 offers unified control for administrators. "The Check Point [R80SmartConsole](#) is very useful," said Helgen. "It lets us craft policies and utilize logging to track down potential issues."

Benefits

Delivering Maximum Availability for Demanding Applications

The Check Point solution provides all the performance and reliability Lindenwood needs to deliver its curriculum to students at any location. Lindenwood installed video cameras in each classroom, which stream live instruction programming to the campus learning management system. Rich media learning applications can sometimes stress security appliances but Check Point solutions continued to perform dependably. "Our students can watch multiple portions of the classroom, but it can put a huge amount of pressure on these new firewalls," said Helgen. "Thankfully they were absolutely amazing. Check Point Next Generation Security Gateways handled all the bandwidth that we can throw at it all while providing students some security from the dangerous and unpredictable world of the internet."

Passing Savings on to Students

Taking control of student internet access has not only provided improved security and control, but also offered additional vendor flexibility to save money. "Bringing the residential network back in house, we've seen massive savings," said Ra. "By leveraging Check Point, along with the wireless and switching vendors that we chose, we were able to save the

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university quite a bit of money. While other universities are charging more and more for tuition, we are very proud that Lindenwood University has continued to offer an affordable private university experience."

Freeing IT Staff, While Minimizing Costs

[Centralized management](#) has also empowered the university's IT team with improved flexibility and efficiency. "One of the benefits of moving to R80 and, soon, R81, is the single pane of glass where everything can be managed through the SmartConsole application," said Helgen. "We have one Check Point quantum Security Gateway set up as an IDS, dedicated to inspecting east-west traffic, as well as two Next Generation Security Gateways on the dorm side. Aggregating them under one management tool is extremely beneficial, because we can simply create new policies for the different types of firewall functions that we have."

Looking Ahead to IPv6 for the Future

Lindenwood is constantly future-proofing its architecture, and IPv6 compatibility was a key requirement of its security initiative. "Our university is essentially a small city, and we have to implement IPv6—there's no way around it," said Helgen. "Other competitors provide really good solutions for IPv4 networking and firewalls, but they put IPv6 on the back burner. Putting IPv6 on Check Point offered us a wide range of benefits for our student population, especially for residential environments."

With Check Point, the Lindenwood IT team can rest assured that its infrastructure will meet all its security needs today, and remain compatible well into the future.

