



Challenge

As part of its proactive crime prevention initiative, Merced College deployed the Avigilon HD Surveillance System to monitor activity across two campuses and ensure the general welfare of staff and students.

Solution

Security officers seamlessly manage the Avigilon HD Surveillance System using Avigilon Control Center Network Video Management Software (NVMS). The College installed Avigilon 16MP, 11MP, and 5MP HD cameras to monitor activity across the campus grounds and parking lots. To ease the transition from analog to digital, Merced College also installed Avigilon Analog Video Encoders to improve the performance of its existing analog cameras, which monitor the interior of several college buildings. Storing up to 30 days of continuous surveillance video onsite, security personnel monitor the Avigilon HD Surveillance System from control rooms located at both campuses.



Benefits

Since deploying the Avigilon HD Surveillance System, Merced College has been able to successfully investigate and resolve numerous cases of crime, vandalism, and assault on campus. Security personnel claim that image quality is one thousand times better than previously possible with their analog-based system. Because of Avigilon's ease-of-use and powerful management tools, security staff can easily capture and review the detail needed to successfully resolve incidents and ultimately reduce crime. The College is also able to leverage existing analog cameras and gradually transition over to a complete HD surveillance system as budget allows.

- *Reduced crime*
- *Leverage existing infrastructure*
- *Easy capture & review*
- *Incredible image quality*

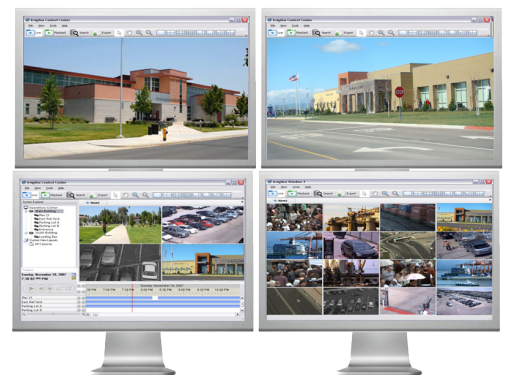


Merced College Relies on Avigilon HD Surveillance System for Campus-wide Crime Prevention

Over the past ten years, school administrators across the country have had to rethink campus security because of the growing threat of violence. As public security concerns intensify, colleges and universities are adding new services to ensure student safety – a top priority for parents, staff, and administrators alike. Focused on providing a safe and secure learning environment, Merced College in Merced, California has engaged a full time police department on campus and has deployed the Avigilon HD Surveillance System as a strategic element of its crime prevention policy and to ensure the general welfare of staff and students.

The Move to HD Surveillance

With 11,000 full-time students, 200 full-time staff, and 600 adjunct instructors, Merced College boasts two campuses – a 250-acre main campus and a 100 acre satellite campus in Los Baños, located 26 miles southwest of Merced. To help in the delivery of a professional and crime-free campus environment, Deputy Sheriff Jim Wilde of the Merced County Sheriff's Office has been appointed to head up the Merced Community College Police Department, with three full-time officers, two parking enforcement officers, and nine part-time security officers. "In light of the growing concern over campus safety, we have implemented a proactive crime prevention strategy that includes a surveillance system that can help us monitor activity across both campuses," explained Deputy Sheriff Wilde. Merced College initially deployed an analog-based surveillance system with Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) cameras, but according to Don Peterson, director of IT at Merced College, "the analog-based system was inadequate to put it mildly."



After seeing a demonstration of the Avigilon HD Surveillance System, the College readily moved to the more advanced and powerful HD system. “It was difficult to manage the proprietary hardware of our previous analog-based system and we found that the PTZ cameras often missed critical portions of an event and couldn’t produce the resolution and detail required for positive identification,” explained Peterson. “With its advanced feature-set and impressive image quality, the Avigilon HD Surveillance System easily resolved these issues.” Deputy Sheriff Wilde concurred: “the Avigilon HD Surveillance System is at least ten times more effective than our previous analog system.”

Avigilon on Campus

Security officers at Merced College seamlessly manage the Avigilon HD Surveillance System using Avigilon Control Center Network Video Management Software (NVMS) with HD Stream Management, which was built from the ground up to manage HD surveillance video. The College installed four 16MP Avigilon HD cameras, six 11MP Avigilon HD cameras, and five 5MP Avigilon HD cameras to monitor activity across the campus grounds and parking lots.

To ease the transition from analog to digital and leverage its existing infrastructure, Merced College also installed 11 Avigilon Analog Video Encoders to dramatically improve the performance of its analog cameras, which monitor the interior of several college buildings. Storing up to 30 days of continuous surveillance video onsite, security personnel monitor the Avigilon HD Surveillance System from control rooms located at both campuses while the food service manager monitors the cafeteria from his office.

Avigilon – Too Good to be True?

“A key differentiator of the Avigilon HD Surveillance System is the fact that enables users to zoom in to examine specific details of an event while it is still recording, a feature we initially thought was too good to be true,” explained Deputy Sheriff Wilde, who contends that no other solution compares with Avigilon’s ability to record and zoom at the same time. “The Avigilon HD Surveillance System also delivers a major improvement in image clarity, resulting in much more useable footage and greater conflict resolution. Overall, image clarity is one thousand times better than what we had before.” In fact, the Merced Community College Police Department has been able to capture license plate details and facial attributes as a result of Avigilon’s powerful zooming capabilities.



“With Avigilon, we can manipulate the footage ourselves, giving us greater control over our investigations and dramatically expediting the entire process.”

Other key features of the Avigilon HD Surveillance System include its user-friendly interface and powerful management tools, which simplified training and facilitate ongoing system operations. “With our previous analog-based system, the vendor had to come out to our data center and work with us to sift through footage and export it for investigative purposes,” explained Peterson. “With Avigilon, we can manipulate the footage ourselves, giving us greater control over our investigations and dramatically expediting the entire process.”

Meeting IT Needs

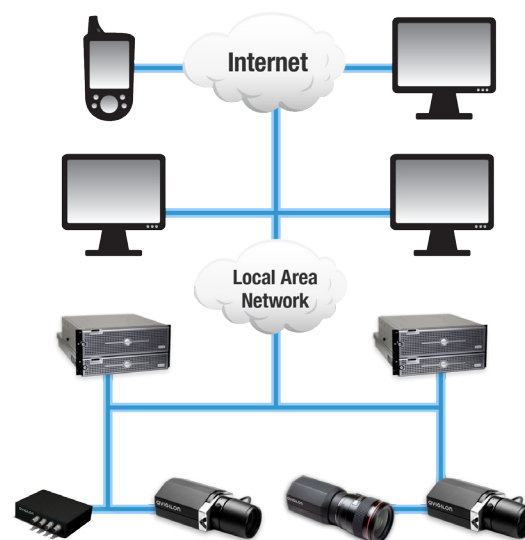
For Arlis Botner, network manager at Merced College, the fact that the Avigilon HD Surveillance System does not require proprietary hardware was another great selling feature. “We had some challenges maintaining the proprietary hardware of our previous system, so finding a new surveillance solution that could run on any platform was essential,” explained Botner. In addition, the College’s previous solution required special networking that needed a lot of upkeep to run properly. “The Avigilon HD Surveillance System just simply works.” The fact that the College can leverage its existing analog cameras was also an important consideration. “As a budget-driven organization, we also liked the fact that we could keep our existing cameras but have the flexibility to transition to HD over time,” added Botner.

Solving Crime – Made Easy

“The evidence collection capabilities of the Avigilon HD Surveillance System are incredible,” exclaimed Deputy Sheriff Wilde. “Since deploying Avigilon, we have been able to successfully investigate and resolve numerous cases of crime, vandalism, and assault on campus.” For example, the College has used footage of hit-and-run accidents in the parking lots, thefts in the cafeteria and campus book store, as well as a book-burning incident in which a student was protesting his class curriculum. “In all cases, we were able to bring the footage to court or show the perpetrators involved, leading to quick resolution, admission of guilt, and the possibility of conviction.”



“The Avigilon HD Surveillance System just simply works.”



Catching Crime in Real-time

In one incident, the Merced College Police Department was even able to stop a crime in real-time by using the Avigilon HD Surveillance System. “Security officers were monitoring the system live when they noticed that an individual was stealing trim off some cars in one of our parking lots,” explained Deputy Sheriff Wilde. “They were able to dispatch an officer to the scene and subsequently caught the perpetrator red-handed.” Before deploying the Avigilon system, the College was rarely able to capture clear, indisputable evidence for investigative purposes.

“We are really glad we chose to deploy the Avigilon HD Surveillance System.”

Greater and Faster Investigations

Because the evidence captured is more reliable, the College is able to achieve greater coverage of events across the entire campus, leading to more investigations and ultimately, greater conflict resolution. “In the past, we typically would only investigate an incident once a month or even every other month,” noted Donaldson. “Now, we are always reviewing footage because it is so much more useable than before.” As a result, the College can achieve greater coverage and ultimately, greater security for staff and students.

In addition, the security team at Merced College can solve issues much faster than before. “With more control over the system, greater image clarity, and advanced zooming capabilities, we have reduced the time it takes to conduct an investigation from days to just minutes – and our success level has skyrocketed,” claimed Deputy Sheriff Wilde. “We are really glad we chose to deploy the Avigilon HD Surveillance System.”

Student Safety on Open Campus

Merced College is committed to creating a safe, yet open campus environment that promotes improved student achievement and well-being. With several initiatives in place, including “code blue” security telephones that provide direct dial access to security staff, a campus-wide announcement system for emergency reporting, its own police department, and the Avigilon HD Surveillance System, the College is well-positioned to meet its security goals.

“With a focus on ensuring student safety, we are always looking for ways to enhance our security programs on campus,” concluded Deputy Sheriff Wilde. “Ultimately, we will completely transition over to the advanced performance and reliability of the Avigilon HD Surveillance System for greater coverage, proactive crime prevention, and peace-of-mind.”