

Dynamic Campus Helps Cloud Community College Achieve Dramatic IT Turnaround



Dynamic Campus

For higher education institutions, communication with students and prospective students is its lifeblood—a lesson Cloud County Community College in Corcordia, Kansas, quickly learned after enrollment declined significantly following a series of email issues that included being blacklisted three times in a nine-month period.

“Any communications we sent regarding acceptance, enrollment and payment were not getting through; we had been blocked as a result of issues with our firewall as well as ransomware and spamware,” says Dr. Danette Toone, Cloud’s president. “Our rural location made our search for an IT director tremendously difficult. Amy Lange, vice president of administrative services, was pulling double duty in the interim, but we knew we needed help keeping our system up and running.”

Cloud turned to Dynamic Campus, signing a two-year contract that brought Dynamic Campus higher education IT veteran Shawn Walden to serve as vice president of information technology and lead its staff of four IT employees. Spending every other week on site, he quickly made a difference—often in unexpected ways.

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Taking Stock And Rebuilding

On Walden's first day, 12 computers wouldn't boot up after the power was shut off during the holidays. "It was a huge problem because students wanted to pay their bills and the records, advising and financial aid departments needed to send progress reports to notify students who were on probation or facing suspension. We weren't able to serve our students in a timely manner without operational computers," says Lange.



The equipment failure signaled a larger problem: Cloud didn't have an inventory of its IT assets, although the administration had been asking for it for three years. "We put on some band aids to solve the immediate problem, but all of the computers that failed were the same seven-to-nine-year-old model and the IT team didn't know how many more of them we had," says Walden. "This isn't uncommon; many institutions don't know what their IT assets are, and the IT team didn't think it was necessary."

Under Walden's leadership, the IT team conducted a full inventory assessment in six weeks to help him devise a desktop replacement plan. While taking inventory, Dynamic Campus concluded Cloud's network infrastructure wasn't designed for expansion and lacked safety and security features it needed. "One of Dynamic Campus' biggest accomplishments has been to complete Phase I of the entire college network infrastructure rebuild, as well as planning for Phase 2,"

says Lange. "Shawn is very thorough and took time on the front-end planning so we would see positive results on the back-end execution. He implemented a true project management process, and supported Cloud's on-site IT team with Dynamic Campus on-demand resources."

Better still, thanks to server farm enhancement and implementation of a storage area network, Dynamic Campus provided Cloud with the ability to maintain equipment remotely if needed. "The network was 12 years old and all of the servers were out of warranty, so Dynamic Campus put together a plan to extend the warranties for a year before putting in a new server farm and core switch," he says. "We spent the first year working on infrastructure, but these upgrades have eased the need for an onsite system administrator."

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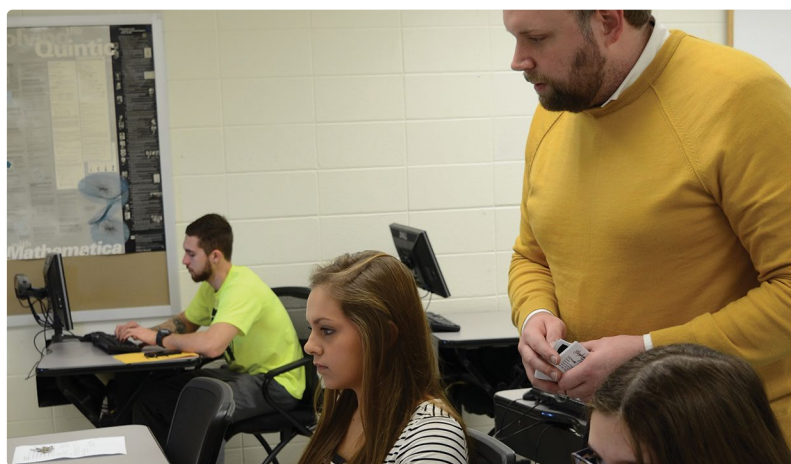
Relieving Headaches

Another headache Dynamic Campus was able to alleviate was migrations for Jenzabar Administrative EX. “We brought in our team of on-demand Jenzabar experts to come in and do business process analysis,” says Walden. “They knew the best approach to take and were able to put Cloud through the data testing process for version 6.3.3 in eight weeks.”

In addition, Dynamic Campus is currently deploying a self-serve password reset solution, which will save the IT team a tremendous amount of time. “Three-fourths of IT’s time is spent doing password resets instead of getting ahead of the game on mission-critical projects,” says Lange.

That became abundantly clear when a Dynamic Campus employee noticed Cloud’s SQL database was not being backed up hourly as scheduled. After 150,000 midterm grades were lost, Dynamic Campus was able to recover the grades within half a day. “If we weren’t on site, it would have taken days to recover, if ever,” says Walden.

“As a small rural community college, we know we don’t have the means to employ IT experts in each area necessary to support all that is required of an educational institution,” says Lange. “The availability of on-demand resources from Dynamic Campus has been an absolute life saver for Cloud.”



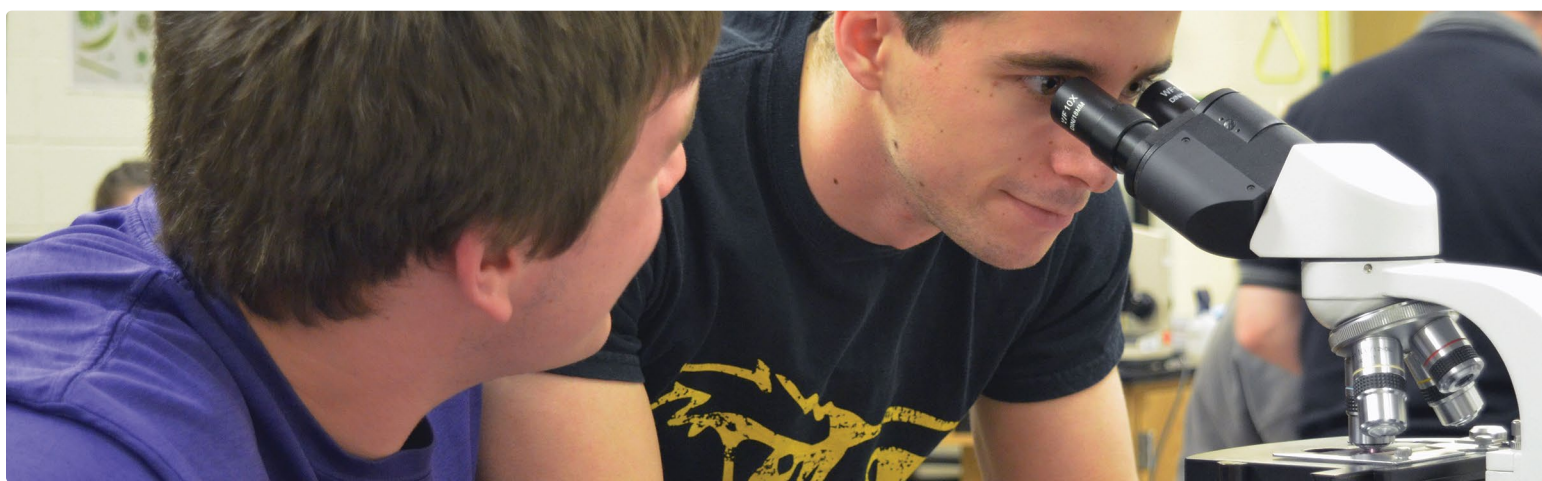
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Small Things Making A Huge Difference

Meanwhile, Walden was meeting with other Cloud staff to determine how to make life much easier for students and faculty. “The assistant track coach stopped by one day to ask about getting internet on buses; student athletes were traveling a minimum of 2.5 hours to their nearest meets or games and up to 12 hours for national tournaments,” he says. “We were quickly able to outfit two buses with WiFi to help keep these students engaged in their academic pursuits while on the road.”



Another meeting led to the creation of a Zoom Room—named after the web conferencing tool of the same name—which gives Cloud the ability to hold a class simultaneously at its Concordia and Junction City campuses. “Zoom is much more cost effective and easier to use than the IPTV they were using,” says Walden. “Professors simply hit ‘Start Meeting’ and ‘Start Presentation’ and can teach 15 students 70 miles away. Likewise, on weeks when I am not on site, I can Zoom into the president’s meeting.”

After a student survey revealed that the wireless connections in student housing were their

biggest complaint, Dynamic Campus designed and conducted a complete upgrade that included a new wireless controller Cloud can also use when upgrading its main buildings. Walden also evaluated Cloud’s broadband internet connection and found a solution that saves \$40,000 annually.

“By switching providers, Shawn increased our bandwidth tenfold,” says Lange. “Looking at how much we have now compared to what we didn’t have in the past is huge. Shawn’s leadership with Dynamic Campus support has given Cloud a solid foundation that will propel us forward.”

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Accomplishing More Than Expected

Two years after bringing Dynamic Campus on board, IT has a very different reputation at Cloud. “Trust in IT has been rebuilt—not only have we had far less downtime from outages, but we also have a much more responsive IT team that is more willing to work on things,” says Toone. “We have a true long-range plan in place that will keep us from sinking in the quicksand.”

Both sides attribute the success to a close working relationship. “From Day One, they treated me like they hired me and I’m on their payroll, and that made a world of difference in what I was able to deliver,” says Walden. “Never in all my years have I had such access to board members—it has been absolutely wonderful.”

“We have a very close working relationship with Shawn and Dynamic Campus. Sometimes we have to have hard conversations with each other and those go very well because there’s a lot of mutual respect,” adds Toone. “Moreover, our IT staff has grown as individuals and overall professionalism has come up several notches. We have accomplished more in the last two years than we did in the previous five. There is a noticeable difference during the weeks when Shawn is here, and we wish we had unlimited resources to have him here full time.”



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Dynamic Campus can help.

Contact us at sales@dynamiccampus.com or **(888) 805-3022**.



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