



NOVA Upgrades to Managed Power

Sprawling campus taps proactive analytics to monitor access control solution

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Leveraging a one-card campus-wide physical security and identification system, Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) students attend a sprawling array of campuses and centers traversing Alexandria and the surrounding areas of Virginia. The second largest community college in the U.S. and one of the largest public educational institutions in Virginia, NOVA continues to add and update its access control, focusing on upgrading power for continued guaranteed reliability. Critical to the ongoing project is being able to obtain 100 percent visibility into system and power health.



Northern Virginia Community College campuses are reaping the benefits of greater system visibility and uptime with network-managed power and electronic access control solutions.

Photo courtesy NOVA College Photographer Kevin Mattingly

NOVA, part of the Virginia Community College System, wanted the ability to proactively preempt system failure or degradation of electronic openings—and it turned to managed power to get the job done. With six campuses located in Alexandria, Annandale, Loudoun, Manassas, Springfield and Woodbridge as well as centers of learning in Manassas and Reston, it's a large area for the Information Technology Support Services Department to cover. Managing physical security and access control campus solution with an abbreviated staff, the IT Department wanted to be able to perform remote monitoring and maintenance to save time and manpower traveling to different sites to address potential system challenges.

Upgrades and updates

NOVA is currently adding access control to areas and upgrading older, legacy hardware and software system wide. A large portion of the project is upgrading to networked power solutions from LifeSafety Power[®] Inc. so the end user can actively prioritize critical infrastructure issues such as a compromised lock or failing battery through managed power services.

NOVA campuses are moving to networking power solutions to proactively monitor the ongoing connectivity of locks and access control. "We had older power

technology and needed to upgrade. We have six technicians covering some 1,000 doors currently and the college continues to add openings,” said Kym Bridgers, MBA, MS and Auxiliary IT and NOVACard Manager, Information Technology Support Services, Northern Virginia Community College, Fairfax, Va.

“We were looking for a power solution that would allow us to be proactive rather than reactive, which is what we were in the past,” Bridgers continued. “Because we are a small group, if things go bad or a lock fails it’s difficult to get to the campuses, as they aren’t in close proximity. This solution allows us to monitor doors and power in a way we haven’t been able to do before,” she said.

NOVA’s IT Services Department began their venture into managed power by testing a single LifeSafety Power managed access panel and quickly expanded its use after positive results.

The IT Department now proactively receives email notifications of any unusual device occurrences, such as insufficient system standby detected through automated battery load tests or a lock or circuit running hot. Bridgers said it’s imperative to have immediate notification so that service calls can be efficiently prioritized. The college has a centralized Command Center but the NOVA IT team now receives primary notifications on the health of hundreds of powered access panels campus wide. Managed power systems monitor and report back any anomalies concerning battery integrity, panel or lock operation which could affect the integrity of the security infrastructure at that location so technician servicing can be prioritized around the most urgent issues.

“We have had notification of issues where we had to reboot devices to bring them back online. Normally we would have to drive out to each campus to do that. Being able to take readers or panels offline and bring them back up to rectify an issue is something we hadn’t been able to do in the past,” Bridgers said.

The upgrade of the power solution began in March 2018 and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. NOVA is using CBORD® Systems and CS Gold® Software from the CBORD Group, Ithaca, N.Y., a system designed specifically for higher education that integrates residential life, food service and cashless retail systems in a one-card offering. CBORD® is a prominent provider of card systems for colleges and universities.

Assisting NOVA with the access control upgrade project is security solution provider Architectural Products of Virginia (APV) - a CBORD certified contractor.

Jeff Lancaster, Security Sales Manager, said APV technicians have been upgrading power solutions in each IT closet—close to 100 total and installing card readers for access control on those doors. APV is also replacing and upgrading doors and exit

devices, adding Allegion Schlage AD-300 locks and HID readers, as well as changing out panels and upgrading door and hardware at the Loudoun campus.

“Hanging enclosures in a tight closet while leaving the system fully functional can be time consuming and tricky,” said Lancaster.

“Monitoring the status of the connected power panel enclosures is critical to NOVA,” he said. The ability to remotely monitor and manage is huge to this customer.”

Conclusion

Managed power solutions provide the widest view of system reliability across a campus or enterprise environment. For NOVA, it gave added assurance that its one-card access control system was up to the task of secure daily identification and credentialing of students, stakeholders and campus visitors.

NOVA Access Control Equipment List

- LifeSafety Power NetLink Network Communications Modules
- HID Readers (cards and keypads)
- Allegion Schlage AD-300 wireless readers
- CBORD System and CS Gold Software

For more information on LSP managed power systems visit:
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