

Ramapo College of New Jersey Gets High Marks For Student Safety With Advanced Fire Protection from NOTIFIER

There are a myriad of excellent reasons why students would apply to New Jersey's Ramapo College. Ranked #2 in a recent *U.S. News & World Report* survey of comprehensive colleges in the north, Ramapo College is committed to offering an environment that is dedicated to the growth, well-being and safety of each of its 5,000 students and 149 faculty members.

Parents are tough critics when choosing the ideal school for their children. Parents are influenced not only by the College's impressive academic credentials and its picturesque 300-acre campus, but also its vigilance for keeping their children safe at their "home away from home."

In keeping with its high standard of excellence, Ramapo College sought an advanced campus wide fire and life safety monitoring system that would protect its newly constructed buildings along with its existing 500,000 sq. ft. of academic space and 500,000 sq. ft. of dormitory space. Required was a versatile, state-of-the art system that would network a variety of systems from different manufacturers already installed in existing buildings as well as the ability to accommodate a great deal of ongoing expansion.

The College required an innovative system that would fulfill these requirements and meet both NFPA and UL standards while avoiding compatibility and service issues.

After assessing their needs, Director of Facilities, William Alagna, specified the powerful UniNet™ 2000 monitoring network from NOTIFIER, the world's largest manufacturer of commercial fire alarm systems and part of Honeywell's Fire Systems Group. UniNet 2000 is a Lonworks-based network that integrates diverse fire, security, access control and CCTV all from a single user interface – in this case, a Windows based color graphics work station located at Ramapo College's main security office. The UniNet 2000's ability to integrate different systems, from different manufacturers, enabled the College to keep existing equipment in place - a huge cost savings benefit.

The UniNet 2000 is well-suited for campuses such as Ramapo College because it is capable of networking over existing fiber optic infrastructures as well as conventional wiring. "On a college campus with a large number of residence halls, academic buildings and ancillary facilities, a major expense is the installation of new conduit and wiring," said Robert Farm, Vice President of Armor Group Integrated Systems, the NOTIFIER engineered systems distributor responsible for the project. "The architecture of the UniNet system is very versatile and allows the use of existing unused fiber optics of various topographies as a signal path."

"There is a tremendous cost savings. We were able to utilize a small number of spare fiber optics to put the network together all in a manner compliant with NFPA standards and local code." Farm adds, "We estimate that Ramapo College saved close to \$100,000 on the wiring and installation alone." Additionally, fiber optics excel at carrying data over the long distances often required at a large campus and are free from

issues such as ground faults and noise pickup which often adversely effect conventional wiring.

At remote locations where neither fiber nor direct wiring was available, UniNet 2000 seamlessly interfaces with a UL listed Digital Alarm Communicator Receiver (DACR) via a simple RS232 connection. The ability to receive alarm, trouble and supervisory signals from listed Digital Alarm Communicator Transmitters via the public telephone system allowed expansion of the network where conventional direct signal paths where not feasible or cost effective.

Rounding out the system are various Network Input – Output Modules (NIONs) which provide an interface between existing local control panels and the network. NIONs are utilized in several configurations from simple, dry contact monitoring to intelligent data conversion. All operational power is provided by UL listed power sources, battery backed power supplies, and UPS.

The performance of the network – the true litmus test of any system – truly merits high grades and help in ensuring parents that their students are in good hands.

Within the new residence halls, individual smoke detectors, heat detectors and signaling devices are located in each bedroom suite. Common areas are likewise covered with the addition of manual pull stations, sprinkler supervisory devices and ADA compliant horn strobe devices in accordance with NFPA standards.

All detectors are linked to intelligent control panels within each building and each control panel is in turn connected to the UniNet 2000 network.

The instant a detector senses smoke or heat, the building evacuation signals are activated and security is alerted. The UniNet 2000 brings critical information to the

responding security personnel indicating on the work station display, the exact location of the detector via text messages and graphic floor plans as well as digital pictures of the location.

Identifying the exact dorm room in which an incident is taking place is critical because, as Robert Farm, explains, “If you have a fire alarm at a college dormitory, you need to be able to immediately assess the situation and take appropriate action. We want students to have confidence in fire alarms and to take them seriously. Having the ability to identify a detector in a specific room deters individuals from vandalizing or tampering with them.”

UniNet 2000’s quick response time and simple graphical interface enables security personnel to immediately react to the situation. The user-friendly workstation includes a host of features including CAD based graphical floor plans and digital imaging for fire and security reporting, a history manager for tracking and storing all system events including alarm type, location, time & date and responses as well as review of detector calibration and condition.

Ramapo College has a life safety system that is not only highly functional, but also one that can grow over time as the college’s needs change and expand.

“Everyone at the college has been impressed with the system,” said Robert O’Brien, Director of Security. “While Ramapo College has always put a premium on student and faculty safety, we now have a system that allows us to fulfill this objective more effectively than ever before.”

“The system can also accommodate security functions,” he added. “The system is already providing for local security monitoring and may be expanded to accommodate

card access and CCTV functions. The possibilities for system growth are virtually endless.”

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