

Education Services Provider Upgrades Infrastructure to Transition to Private Cloud



Career Education Corporation integrates Cisco data center solutions to enable pervasive virtualization and cloud computing.

Executive Summary

Career Education Corporation (CEC)

- **Industry:** Education
- **Location:** Headquartered in Schaumburg, Illinois USA
- **Number of Campuses:** More than 90 campuses internationally

CHALLENGE

- Need for a more mobile learning environment
- Need for faster installation times and greater flexibility, storage and speed online
- Significant portion of physical servers out of warranty, limiting IT capabilities

SOLUTION

- Deploy Cisco-NetApp FlexPod to support cloud computing
- Integrate Cisco Nexus 7000 Series switches for network scalability

RESULTS

- Enabled integration of a single, cost-effective solution to meet a comprehensive set of technology initiatives
- 75 percent or more of CEC community to be running off of private cloud by the end of 2013
- Increased IT department productivity by streamlining operations
- Potential for future business growth

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Dave Czeszewski, vice president of information technology at Career Education Corporation

Challenge

Career Education Corporation (CEC) is an international post-secondary educational services provider, operating over 90 campuses around the globe. Founded in 1994, CEC has grown to develop a wide range of schools, colleges and online universities, offering associate’s, bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business administration, culinary arts, education, health, information technology (IT), art and design.

Enrolling nearly 75,000 students in on-site and online programs internationally, CEC has 12,000 employees in on-campus and remote positions to meet the varying needs of its diverse student communities. With an extensive online component at CEC, included on the staff is CEC Labs, a team of IT professionals who internally develop all of CEC’s learning technology platforms and ensure the network and its infrastructure are functioning effectively.

In 2011, CEC began implementing mobile learning applications, adaptive learning capabilities, developing its 4th generation virtual campus and an innovative content management system. In preparing to equip the CEC community with quicker installation times and greater flexibility, storage and speed online, the CEC IT determined that a new innovative infrastructure approach was required to match the innovation being delivered to CEC’s student body.

“It was a critical time for IT within our organization,” says Dave Czeszewski, vice president of information technology at Career Education Corporation. “With the convergence of technology initiatives all coming together at once, we needed to come up with a single solution to achieve all of our IT objectives within the current budget, over a period of a year.”

Solution

In preparing for an upgraded technology infrastructure, CEC consulted with several vendors and determined that Cisco’s FlexPod would provide an ideal, multifaceted data center platform, capable of expanding as CEC’s network and enrollment numbers continue to grow. FlexPod, which uses NetApp storage technologies coupled with Cisco servers and networking, is designed for robust cloud computing.

By deploying FlexPod, CEC Labs is now able to more easily design, update and deploy its learning management software and applications into a private cloud. The cloud serves as a means for administrators and students to more quickly gain access to and download programs and course materials.

FlexPod enables CEC to optimize its virtualization, not only at its headquarters in Illinois, but also at its 75 branch campuses. The technology has enabled increased storage utilization and capacity and is compatible with the wide range of software and programs CEC Labs incorporates.

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Dave Czeszewski, vice president of information technology at Career Education Corporation

Product List

ROUTING AND SWITCHING

- Cisco Nexus 7000 Series Switches

DATA CENTER

- Cisco-NetApp FlexPod

At the foundation of FlexPod, CEC integrated Cisco Nexus 7000 Series switches, which function as the core of the data center network. The switches further serve to give CEC a comprehensive data center platform that is highly scalable and resilient. With Cisco’s network scalability, CEC will be able to incorporate additional blade servers into the FlexPod, allowing the organization to expand its cloud computing capabilities moving forward.

Results

The new data center platform enabled CEC to realize its vision of deploying a single solution under a set budget to achieve its combined technology initiatives. With the expansive capabilities of FlexPod, CEC is planning for 75 percent or more of its constituents to be running off of their private cloud by the end of 2013.

The data center solution has also provided CEC with the means to establish a disaster recovery center through backup and replication technology in the event of a system malfunction, fire or other unforeseen incidents. The recovery center will ultimately prevent the loss of revenue for CEC, in addition to increasing the IT department’s productivity by cutting down on the time required to salvage any lost or damaged critical data.

Before deploying FlexPod, CEC was operating off of a traditional, physical IT environment. With the upgraded cloud computing infrastructure, CEC is now able to consolidate its data centers, overall providing less network complexity and lower operating costs. The solution will also provide greater flexibility and network speed to equip CEC’s 12,000 employees and 75,000 students with the ability to thrive in a more mobile learning environment.

“The online education component of CEC generates nearly 50% of its revenue,” said Czeszewski. “With the help of Cisco technologies, we have now transitioned to a clear path forward for expanding upon that business.”

For More Information

To find out more about FlexPod, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/flexpod>.

To find more about Cisco Nexus 7000 Series Switches, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/switches>

To find out more about Cisco Unified Computing System, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/ucs>

