Two Terrains At Once: Police Chief Secures Two Very Different Campuses Simultaneously

For the typical rural school, many security issues stem from relative isolation and limitless space. How do you keep track of far-flung spaces with lower population density? For a school in an urban or semi-urban setting, the issues are often the opposite: How do you discreetly monitor a bustling space where it might be too easy for mischief-makers—such as thieves or vandals—to blend into the crowd?

Now imagine you’re a campus police force charged with securing both kinds of environments in one school. That’s the challenge for the police department at the College of Marin (COM), a community college in Marin County just north of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge.

COM offers students an affordable education in one of the Bay Area’s most exclusive suburban regions. But while the school is a smart, straightforward option for students who want to fulfill their general education requirements before transferring to a 4-year school or earning an Associate’s Degree, the college presents a challenging landscape for security staff.
COM serves about 6,000 students and boasts famous alumni such as actor Robin Williams, wild gorilla advocate Dian Fossey and country music star Naomi Judd. The main campus opened in 1926 in Kentfield on what had been a 16-acre country estate. Over the ensuing decades, a relatively dense suburb—subdivisions, tennis clubs, upscale shopping malls and the county hospital—grew up near the campus buildings. In 1975, COM opened a second campus in Indian Valley, a rural area of horse farms and parks 15 miles to the north.

Chief of Police Jeff Marozick arrived at COM after 25 years at the San Jose Police Department, a couple hours south. Marozick had friends and family living nearby, and he liked the idea of helping to keep the community school just as safe and hospitable as the picturesque towns it serves.

“My challenge was the parking lots,” Marozick explains. “A lot of those locations don’t have power or Wi-Fi. Although our crime rate is very low, most of the crimes occur in our parking lots, such as assaults, burglaries and hit & runs.”

Yet the college’s many parking lots presented very different problems for the 12-officer department. In Kentfield, the campus is relatively compact and bustling. In Indian Valley, students share the campus with wild turkeys that wander around the hiking trails, creeks and athletic fields. For years, the COM police department didn’t always have access to a unified security technology approach, Marozick says.

“We used to have disparate systems that different facilities managed, but we didn’t have reliable access to video,” explains Marozick. “We have limited manpower to cover two campuses 15 miles apart.”

Until V5 Systems, a Silicon Valley technology company that has done work with police departments in and around the San Jose area where Marozick hails from.

V5 Systems had developed self-powered, turnkey hardware and software units to run sensors in the outdoors, where access to power and connectivity can be cumbersome. The hardware powers and provides storage and communications while the software allows users to access data from the V5 Cloud and the V5 Multi-sensor Management System via its iOS/Android mobile app and web browser. The company’s flagship products include surveillance, gunshot detection and video analytics designed to enhance public safety. When Marozick first spoke to V5 Systems, the company had just collaborated with UCLA to increase student safety during its move-in day.

“V5 Systems had the ability to remotely put a camera where I needed it, whether or not electricity and Wi-Fi were available,” Chief Marozick explains. “I could deploy a whole system for less than $100,000. Without V5 Systems, we would have had to piece together a system with different vendors, one for solar, one for data storage and so on. I would have had to involve the purchasing and IT departments. We would have had to put a more expensive solution out to bid. It would have taken longer and cost more.”
The COM police department installed OnSight Portable Surveillance Units, including a unit with the ability to read license plates, and several OnSight Portable Camera Adaptive Platforms that powered 3rd party cameras. These units have served as force multipliers for the officers, allowing them to monitor both campuses simultaneously. Crucially, the department now has a unified system to address public safety and crime. The ability to view all units from a single UI was key to closing any existing security gaps between the campuses.

Marozick appreciates that the units help his department cover a large area with a relatively small staff. “We currently have cameras in seven different parking lots. One officer can sit at a desk and monitor all of them. And if it’s difficult to rely on eyewitnesses, we have the video footage for evidence. The system has helped us with reported hit-and-runs. Having a video archive is key,” he explains.

The department has also taken advantage of how easy it is to move or re-deploy components of the security network as needed. “Sometimes there are events up at Indian Valley. We can move an OnSight unit up there for that event. The college is also spending about $250 million in bond money to make various improvements. Construction equipment gets stolen. The V5 Systems multi-view video gives us 360-degree coverage and better security. Having the ability to move parts of the system quickly allows me to fulfill my mission better.”

Marozick says he plans to expand COM’s security network, covering remote pockets in the back of various parking lots and other hard-to-reach spots. It’s important that the V5 Systems units don’t need to be hard-wired, but can run completely off its proprietary solar power. “I don’t want to be limited to where I have power,” he says. “I want to create the best strategic place for a camera and V5 Systems allows me to do that.”

“The solution was uniquely flexible and cost-effective. Having one User Interface made the learning curve easy and made response coordinated. That was critical.”

- Chief Marozick
For the police chief, keeping the campuses safe is personal. “The college is part of the community,” Marozick explains. “My family and friends attend classes here. People feel safer knowing that our department and the cameras are there. They have peace of mind. This is safety for the whole community.”

Summary

**Organization**
College of Marin offers students an affordable education in one of the Bay Area’s most exclusive suburban regions. The college educates its student body on two campuses in order to provide a holistic educational experience.

**Problem**
A decentralized college strives to provide affordable, but effective, security for two very different and distinctive suburban campuses: one in the middle of a suburban town, the other out in the countryside.

**Solution**
A cost-effective, turnkey, multi-sensor array of OnSight Portable Surveillance Units, OnSight Portable Camera Adaptive Platforms that power 3rd party cameras, and OnSight Portable License Plate Readers from V5 Systems. The entire security solution can be flexibly deployed in diverse settings with no loss in efficiency.

**Results**
Now the college PD can monitor both campuses from a single UI and use the same technology to address very different environments, increasing student and faculty safety in the process.