



About Customer

Founded nearly 200 years ago, Mississippi College is the oldest and largest private university in Mississippi. Its focus on Christian values is evident in both its classrooms and curriculum, from liberal arts and law to medical sciences.

www.mc.edu

GEO

North America

Industry

Higher Education

Solution Area

Accelerate Core Applications

Products in Use

Pure Storage FlashArray™
Pure Storage Pure1

Mississippi College Powers Education with Always-On Tech

Mississippi College (MC) may be the oldest university in Mississippi, but the organization is quite forward-thinking when it comes to technology. CIO Bill Cranford is constantly looking for ways to support students, faculty, and staff with reliable technology that's always on—so the university can focus on education.

Storage plays a key role at the university, supporting MC's Banner ERP system, virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), and other core systems. So, when poor performance in the SAN started affecting faculty and staff, MC decided to make a change—migrating to Pure Storage® and pursuing an all-flash data center strategy.

“We decided to go all-flash in our data centers. We migrated to Pure Storage FlashArray in a single weekend and have never looked back.”

BILL CRANFORD,
CIO, MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

Impact on Mississippi College



Keeps ERP system running smoothly, with performance faculty can rely on



Supports remote work for staff with a growing virtual desktop environment



Simplifies management to keep the university looking toward the future

Challenges



Staff struggled with slow response times from the Banner ERP system



Users needed more capacity to store files and work effectively



Small IT team needed easy-to-manage storage, within budget

Technology should be as reliable as turning on the lights

As CIO at MC, Cranford knows students, faculty, and staff count on him to keep technology running smoothly.

“Technology has become a utility, just like water, gas, or electricity,” Cranford says. “Our users don’t care where it comes from, or how it got there. They just want it to work.”

He usually doesn’t hear from users unless something goes wrong—like when storage became a bottleneck for the Banner ERP system. Banner supports everything from HR and finance to student financial aid and donor relations, so performance lags can be a real problem.

“We were getting complaints from faculty and staff about slow response times,” says Cranford. “During pre-registration, when hundreds of students register for a class at the same time, users would sometimes get kicked out of the system.”

Plus, dwindling capacity meant Cranford had to limit the amount of file storage space for faculty and staff. It was clear the university’s hybrid SAN needed an upgrade.

Results



Improves ERP performance, even in peak usage times such as registration



Helps faculty and staff serve students better with more file space



Offers advanced features like de-dupe and compression for a small budget

Performance so good, users notice the difference

“We decided to go all-flash in our data centers,” says Cranford. “We migrated to Pure Storage FlashArray™ in a single weekend and have never looked back.”

Over time, MC moved all of its critical systems to Pure, ultimately installing two FlashArrays and migrating its Banner environment just in time for the busy pre-registration period. This time, Cranford did hear from users—and it was all positive.

“After we migrated to Pure, the registrar called me to say how smoothly everything went,” says Cranford. “The performance improvements made a big difference—no more delays or dropped sessions. When it all works, faculty and staff can focus on serving students, and students can focus on learning.”

MC later added 100 VMware Horizon VDI terminals to Pure Storage FlashArray//X—without a dent in performance. This enables faculty and staff to remotely access administrative apps, so they can support students from anywhere. Behind the scenes, Cranford’s small team uses the Pure1® app to manage the environment, taking advantage of advanced features like deduplication and compression to free up capacity and give users more file storage space.

For Cranford, the real benefit is making sure technology is always on—so Mississippi College can focus on providing students with the best education possible, instead of struggling with technology.

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