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Technology in higher education

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

EAU CLAIRE, WI

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Providing excellence in higher education since 1916, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire continues to receive national recognition for its quality academics and high return on investment. As a technology leader within the University of Wisconsin System, UWEC is proud to offer students and faculty a quality, high-tech campus environment.

"It's not work. Our customers are our students, and everything we do is for them," said Chip Eckardt, Chief Information Officer, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Over the years, Learning and Technology Services (LTS), the central IT unit at UWEC, has helped shape the vision and mission of technology on campus. LTS continually works to mold the university's future by creating opportunities for students to learn and grow. Eckardt said, "We want to teach students so they know how to think creatively – to think outside the box."

His colleagues agree. "We try to give students a very broad pallet of experiences," said Craig Ernst, Collaborative Technologies Specialist, UWEC. "We give them the tools they need so they can succeed at anything they're going to do in life."

Brandon Knuth, Apple Administration and Support Specialist, UWEC, echoed this thought, "What we do in IT is in some way helping the educational impact of the students."

AT A GLANCE

| University of Wisconsin Eau Claire | Technology leader within the University of Wisconsin system | Single full-time employee oversees management of the university's 650+ Macs | Remotely manages a robust suite of technologies on campus through zero-touch deployment | Relies on the stability and proven success of the Apple platform | Enables users to create unique, customized environments through Self Service | Utilizes Jamf Nation as a dynamic resource for support |

PROVEN SUCCESS WITH APPLE

For Eckardt, there's no questioning which computer is paving the way for students and faculty at UWEC. He received his first Mac in the early 1980s and brought his love for Apple to campus a handful of years later. "I was probably the first evangelist for Macs here," he said. The first, but not the only.

Knuth also had extensive Apple experience – first using the product in the early 1990s. "I definitely prefer Apple products." Along with their stability and reliable platform, he added, "They always come across as being user focused."

UWEC now has more than 650 Macs on campus, a number that continues to see steady growth. Ernst isn't surprised. "The hardware is great. I can't beat it with anything else I've used," he said.

SMART, RELIABLE MANAGEMENT

Managing the university's robust suite of technologies, including remote-connectivity capabilities and classroom polling software, can be a challenge, but Mac management isn't a pain point – anymore.

Prior to implementing Jamf's software, while he was working for LTS as a student, Knuth recalled the management of check-out computers. "I remember having to manually check out the laptops as they came in," he said about the daunting inventory and prep process. "It was time consuming and painful." The configurations that then took nearly two hours per computer are now finished in a matter of minutes.

In addition to the time-consuming inventory process, all computer issues that arose required an in-person fix from an IT staff member. This meant countless hours of schedule coordination and long treks to all corners of campus to access faculty computers – all eliminated with the implementation of Jamf's software.

Knuth is the single full-time employee, who along with a couple students, manages all of the Macs at UWEC. "I think that speaks loudly of the products we're using," he said about the Jamf's intuitive, yet powerful interface. "I know we have the tools we need to maintain the environment. I don't know how we'd do it without Jamf."

HIDDEN SUCCESSES

UWEC continues to set the technology standards within the UW System. They share their best practices and proven successes with other schools to enhance the capabilities of faculty, while expanding learning opportunities for students across the state.

Knuth said one of the most notable successes is when, through the power of mobile device management (MDM), he's able to address problems and configure devices on the backend, without disrupting the user. "I want the faculty to see my face when they're not having a problem," Knuth said. And it works.

Over the last few years, Knuth said he's seen a change on campus. Along with submitting fewer IT tickets, faculty are embracing the intuitive Mac platform and are taking more individualized steps to create their own customized app store through Jamf's Self Service.

"We're here to serve the faculty so they can serve the students," Knuth said. "We can do that efficiently with Jamf, and it makes everyone's job easier."

"Apple products and Jamf make our lives easier, but more importantly, they make faculty and students learning and work experiences better."

— Chip Eckardt, Chief Information Officer
   University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

SUPERIOR SUPPORT RESOURCES

"The product makes it easy to do things on our own," Knuth said. Jamf Nation, a dynamic and knowledgeable community of Apple-focused IT admins hosted by Jamf, is Knuth's go-to resource for any and all things Jamf. Available 24/7, Ernst agreed. "Jamf Nation is second to none when it comes to getting what you need for answers."

Throughout a long history with the company, Eckardt said he knows Jamf's superior customer support is an industry-leading resource. "On a scale of one to 10, Jamf is close to an 11," he said.

Appreciating the vast scope of help at his disposal, and recognizing that through it all he's able to deliver a great product to faculty and students at UWEC, Knuth said, "We have all these resources and we use them all the time. Jamf makes our lives easier. Jamf makes things work."

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