

# Baker College Improves Communication Between Students and Faculty

“WE ARE EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH OUR DECISION TO USE MIRAPPOINT. WITH MIRAPPOINT, BAKER COLLEGE NOW HAS AN EFFECTIVE, RELIABLE, AND SECURE EMAIL SOLUTION - AND I HAVE PEACE OF MIND.”

*Joel Hoitenga, Vice President for Information Systems, Baker College*

CASE STUDY | EDUCATION



**BAKER  
COLLEGE**

## BUSINESS NEED

Reliable, flexible, secure email solution that gives universal access to more than 21,000 students and faculty of a growing college

## SOLUTION

Mirapoint Message Server

## BOTTOM LINE

The Mirapoint system has enabled better communication among the college's students and faculty through universal email access

## Background

As one of the fastest-growing career education systems in America's heartland, Baker College offers over 75 diploma, certificate, Associate, Bachelor, and Masters programs in the fields of business, health and human services, technology, and engineering. The college currently enrolls over 21,000 students on twelve sites across the state of Michigan. The school's mission is to prepare its students for careers in the shortest possible time. To that end, Baker College offers many of its courses over the Internet. Some 1,100 undergraduate and 700 graduate students take their classes completely online, and over 4,500 students take at least one online course. For these online students, email is a particularly important means of communicating - with other students and with faculty. With its twelve distinct sites, Baker College also relies on email for intra- and inter-campus communications between faculty, staff, and students.

## The Business Need

Until early 2002, Baker College's staff and faculty were using a decentralized email system based on Pegasus mail - a freeware solution often used in the education community - running on top of a dozen Novell servers located across various campuses. Students were using a separate Unix-based email system. "We had two separate systems on two different platforms, which made email administration difficult and time-consuming," said Joel Hoitenga, vice president for Information Systems for Baker College. "It felt as if everything was stitched together." As Baker College's use of email grew, the disparate system became overwhelmed and would often crash, leaving faculty and students angry and frustrated over the lack of email access. "As we added more students and locations to accommodate our growth, the Novell servers couldn't keep up and would just stop working, leaving entire campuses without email," said Hoitenga. When the disparate system was working, users were tied to their campus computer to send and receive email. "I could send and retrieve email from my office, but I was completely disconnected when I was at home or visiting another campus," added Hoitenga. "It just didn't fit into the real-time culture that exists on a modern college campus." Hoitenga and his staff knew they had to find a more reliable, flexible, and secure email solution that would enable Baker College to bring its email up to the standard of the rest of the college's cutting-edge image.



## Baker College

### The Mirapoint Solution

As they evaluated new solutions, Baker College wanted a single system that could serve all of its campuses and support the growing student base and faculty members. “We considered other solutions but concluded that the migration path was not particularly easy,” said Hoitenga. “We also wanted universal email access - the ability to send and receive messages from any computer at any location.” After an extensive search and evaluation, Baker College chose the Mirapoint Message Server™ in a cluster configuration to handle its college-wide email, routing, and storage. They found that the transition to the new Mirapoint system was fast and painless. “We were able to transition 32,000 email accounts in half a day and had email up and running within six hours,” said Hoitenga. “In addition, the Mirapoint support staff was wonderful to work with. They were very professional, helpful, and knowledgeable. The combination of Mirapoint’s solution and their professional services staff helped everything go incredibly smoothly.”

### The Bottom Line

To Hoitenga, the most important benefit of the Mirapoint system is that Baker College students and faculty now have universal access to their email. Using Mirapoint’s WebMail Direct,™ from any computer with an Internet connection, students taking online classes can access email, talk on a discussion board, and read a class syllabus - all within the same browser. With Mirapoint, students are just a click away from emailing the instructor or another student. All of this improves communication among students and faculty - a key to making Baker College’s students successful. Mirapoint has also improved the security of Baker College’s email system. “We liked Mirapoint’s appliance approach to email, because appliances are inherently more secure and resistant to hacking,” said Hoitenga. “At a college level, this is particularly important, as students seem to view it their duty to try to hack into systems as an extension of their classwork.” Finally, the Mirapoint system has enabled Baker College’s IT staff to focus on more important tasks. Now, instead of spending time keeping its old email system running, they can focus on new applications and systems. Another benefit of the Mirapoint installation is that Baker College’s Help Desk is less busy answering email-related questions, enabling them to handle more critical issues.

“We are extremely pleased with our decision to use Mirapoint for our email solution and plan to add more Mirapoint systems as part of our disaster recovery plans in the next few months,” concluded Hoitenga. “With Mirapoint, Baker College now has an effective, reliable, and secure email solution - and I have peace of mind.”

### About Mirapoint

Mirapoint® is the market leader in appliance-based solutions for secure message networks in enterprise, service provider, and education organizations, with more than 100 million mailboxes served and secured worldwide. Customers use Mirapoint appliances including the Message Server mail appliance and RazorGate mail security appliance to build the messaging infrastructure that intelligently serves, secures and manages email. Mirapoint is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, with offices throughout North America, Europe and Asia. For more information on Mirapoint, visit its Website at [www.mirapoint.com](http://www.mirapoint.com).

### Configuration

- Mirapoint Message Server cluster configuration