Institutions of higher education seek more control over the costs and operation of the multiple buildings and facilities found on each campus. Often, due to age of a building, capital available due to endowments, size of the building or many other reasons a university facility manager will often find that different buildings on campus present different challenges. The campus might have 3 or 4 different addressable fire alarm panels spread throughout the campus. For instance, they might find that one group of buildings has a long term history using major manufacturer's HVAC system; yet another group of buildings might use a different manufacturer's system. One building might have the latest in digital controls while another is lucky to have any controls at all.

In this time of increasing enrollment, decreasing funding and increasing energy costs, facility managers are under pressure to decrease operating costs and increase efficiency while maintaining an environment conducive to education. And with the need for increased security, not only from outside the campus but also from curious students, the facility manager needs to make sure that these controls are kept secure.

Many universities are moving to open systems for campus wide control using such protocols as BACnet, LonWorks, OPC, or Modbus. But what do they do about the large numbers of legacy systems and devices spread throughout the campus? Energy savings is a common source of savings yet, how do you bring the information from energy meters such as Veris or Controlotron to the common backbone to feed the information to a central control? Or, the facility manager might find Simplex fire panels in some buildings, Notifier in others and EST in some more. Chillers might include both York and Carrier, plus fume hood controls from Tek Aire, HVAC controls from Johnson Controls and Trane, air conditioning systems from Data Aire and Canatal, plus backup generators from Caterpillar. How do you maintain campus wide control, increase efficiency and reduce energy costs without replacing all these different legacy systems?

This is where Sierra Monitor provides the solution that facility managers seek. Sierra Monitor is the largest manufacturer of gateways in the building automation industry with the largest library of protocol drivers available plus the greatest experience of interfacing to this network of legacy devices. With a FieldServer the facility manager is able to make each of these different legacy systems appear as another node on the common campus wide network. For example, if LonWorks was the backbone, the Veris energy meter, Simplex fire panels, Data Aire air conditioners, York chiller and Tek Aire fume hood controls would all appear to be LonWorks nodes. The same is true for BACnet, Modbus or any other protocol.

Other Universities across the country have found that FieldServer gateways can help them achieve the interoperability they need to control operating costs campus wide.