Case Study
Southwestern Community College District

PORTALGUARD®
A BIO-key® Solution.

"Since we implemented PortalGuard, password reset help desk calls have decreased dramatically. The Single Sign-On implementation could not have been easier and we have since integrated it with SharePoint, Blackboard, Canvas, OWA, and WebAdvisor. The product is simple to configure and maintain. We could not be more pleased with how this product and company have worked for our needs."

Clifford Sharp
Network Security System Analyst, Southwestern Community College

About Southwestern CCD

Located in Chula Vista, California, Southwestern College (SWC) is one of 113 public community college districts in the state. As the only higher education institution located in the southern portion of San Diego County, SWC serves over 30,000 students and plays an important role in the intellectual growth of more than 400,000 residents that call South County home. The institution needed a solution for providing self-service password reset and seamless single sign-on (SSO) to students, faculty and staff.

Specific Pain Point

IT help desk is inundated with password resets from students & faculty. Existing Identity Provider (IdP) is difficult so support and maintain Disparate applications are not available to students during system outage.

Existing Challenge

When Southwestern College began its search for a Self-Service Password Reset solution, their IT help desk was inundated with passwords resets. With an ineffectual password reset instance in place, these help desk calls continued to surge during the first and last week of each semester. While significantly reducing this call volume remained a high priority, the IT department wanted to foster a better user experience, and streamline their 30,000 users on multiple apps. With varying SSO standards in place, over 12 different applications required Single Sign-On, including SharePoint, Blackboard, Canvas, and OpenCCCApply, the state's online gateway to California Community Colleges

---

Customer Profile

Industry:

Higher Education

32,000 users

Location:

California

Top Applications Used:

Canvas, Blackboard and G Suite

"We had two immediate projects that came up. Our IdP connection to OpenCCCApply was difficult at best to support and maintain. The initial expenditure of time and effort to get IDP to OpenCCCApply operational required 3 months of configuration. The second project was the need to implement Single Sign-On throughout our campus community," says Clifford Sharp, Network Security System Analyst at Southwestern College. Another challenge was finding a disaster recovery backup solution to integrate with that was simple and reliable. Applications like Canvas, Blackboard, and G-Suite are crucial for students and faculty—providing them access to online classes, schedule updates, etc. Because these applications are all hosted, the IT team doesn't want them to be dependent on their own network. In the event of an on-premise outage students and faculty are unable to access their online classes, schedule updates, etc. in the event of an on-premise outage.

The PortalGuard Resolution

Centralized Self-Service Password Reset

The California institution reviewed multiple identity management providers as the deadline for their project grew closer. Southwestern College selected PortalGuard as the best match for the school's budget and specific set of needs, with granular self-service features such as forced enrollment and password reset, significantly reducing help-desk calls. "After doing some research, we chose PistolStar's PortalGuard product. The product was simple to configure and maintain," recalls Sharp.

Web-Based Single Sign-On Made Easier With the PortalGuard IdP

With support for multiple federation protocols, PortalGuard now provides SWC with Single Sign-On to over 12 applications using both SAML and CAS SSO standards, fostering a better user and admin experience. "This solution went smoothly and with little effort. We have since integrated it with SharePoint, Blackboard, Canvas, OWA and WebAdvisor. We could not be more pleased with how this product and company have worked out for our needs," states Sharp.

Disaster Recovery – Increasing Application Reliability with PortalGuard and Microsoft Azure

Another service Southwestern College found especially useful is PortalGuard's tightly integrated disaster recovery. Coupled with Microsoft Azure's cloud computing environment, PortalGuard was able to clone their on-premise instance in an Azure virtual machine. In the case of an outage, students, and faculty are able to login to all applications, including G-Suite, Canvas, and Blackboard. This move allows SWC's IT department to focus not only on teaching, learning, and research, but also on supporting their institution's use of solutions instead of just maintaining them.

PortalGuard is a cybersecurity authentication package that delivers a full set of features in a single, fully customizable solution. PortalGuard provides single sign-on (SSO), self-service password reset (SSPR), two-factor authentication (2FA), and over 130 other features to ensure that each campus is equipped with the tools needed to face any authentication challenge.