



TECHNICAL & SCIENTIFIC APPLICATION, INC.

Samford University: Aging Security to Future Savings

About Samford University:

Samford University was first founded as Howard College in 1841 when the Alabama Baptist State Convention decided to establish a Christian college for the men of Perry County, Alabama. The first student body in 1842 was made up of nine men, but by 1913, the college had become co-educational. Howard College continued to grow in size and repute, and after its adoption of the Cumberland School of Law in 1965, it was renamed to its current “Samford University” after one of the school’s longtime trustees.

Today, Samford University is listed as Alabama’s top nationally ranked private university and remains the 87th oldest college in the United States. The university offers 168 undergraduate majors, minors, and concentrations, has a student body of 5,509, and maintains a student-to-faculty ratio of 12:1. As it has been from its inception, Samford University’s mission is to foster a diverse community of believers that strives for higher education and for the betterment of the world.

But they need the right infrastructure to do it.

In all, Samford University’s infrastructure supports over 6,000 individuals on a given day. The leadership and IT teams have always felt a deep responsibility for the physical and technical security of their educational community. But, like many smart organizations with finite budgets, they were open to cost-cutting initiatives and looking for compelling ROIs when it came to their technology solutions.

The Samford network had been operating on two aging Palo Alto-5000 firewalls that would be coming up for renewal in the next few months. However, other than dealing with a few minor throughput bottleneck issues, the Samford IT team was relatively happy with their current setup and the subsequent support they received from Palo Alto. It was good technology and functional, if a little old. When approached about the need for contract renewal, Samford upper management considered simply renewing the maintenance support on the existing units because they weren’t looking to make a big change. At the time, Samford considered the increased Palo Alto maintenance costs worth the price of continuing to support their functional infrastructure. But, what seemed a good idea—maintaining the status quo—could have been quite costly. Knowing about Samford’s throughput issues, Palo Alto brought in TSA to partner with Samford, get to know their specific needs, and review their security plans.

Solution Requirements:

The TSA security team worked with IT management team at Samford University to determine the state of the current security infrastructure as well as the effect of the rising Palo Alto maintenance costs on the old PA-5000 firewalls. In doing so, we found a better fit for Samford’s immediate and future

needs—a new product that Palo Alto was introducing to the market—the 5220 firewall series. These brand new, cutting-edge units offered more than seven times the throughput of Samford’s older PA-5000’s as well as more updated security protocols. In order for Samford University to refresh their existing firewall units, they would need:

- No disruption of coverage
- Satisfaction of compliance requirements
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Guaranteed, favorable ROI

TSA Delivered:

With these requirements in mind, we worked with Palo Alto to build a compelling offer that would allow Samford to upgrade for their future growth. With the hardware decided on and the offer accepted, TSA ordered the necessary units through Palo Alto and delivered them directly to the Samford University data center. From there, the Samford IT team was easily able to migrate and install the new firewalls in less than three days.

There were competing offers from Cisco and Check Point respectively for the firewall refresh, but, in the end, Samford decided to stick with Palo Alto technology. Admittedly, TSA’s planning work with Samford made it an easy decision for the university. Samford’s new PA5220 firewalls made for a non-disruptive in-place upgrade to the older 5000’s

firewalls—a factor made more important by the fact that the entire university’s network was relying on these two units. Moreover, not only was the migration simplified, Samford’s IT team would be able to keep the same exact security processes as before because they were using upgraded, yet similar infrastructure.

Also, because of the discount that we were able to offer Samford on their maintenance contract, the university purchased two completely new firewalls (as well as three years of support) for considerably less money than they would have paid to support their previous units for the same amount of time. In all, the project saved Samford almost \$40,000 over three years while mitigating their throughput issues and introducing increased security capabilities.

Results Built from Relationship:

At TSA, we look to partner with corporations and institutions that share similar values. We recognized that Samford’s mission statement and core values mirrored the same passion and dedication that we strive towards—both as a company and in our community. Add that to the fact that several of our team members attended Samford in the past—we were thrilled to be able to work with them and, together, provide such a successful solution for their security needs.



IS YOUR LEGACY TECHNOLOGY LEAVING YOU UNSURE OF WHAT COMES NEXT?

Contact TSA to analyze with you and help choose the right strategy for you.