

### CUSTOMER

Lake Washington Institute of Technology



## Ednetics Delivers Huge Upfront Savings, Then 24/7 Support for Technical Institute

*Lake Washington Institute for Technology saved on relicensing and a new OS, then acquired full Cisco-certified phone system support*

### Summary

Lake Washington Institute of Technology purchased a new Cisco campus phone system in 2010. Six years later, a new director of IT took over only to find that the system's licensing and operating system was out of date. Faced with fees to relicense and upgrade the system, the IT director worked with Ednetics to clean up the existing license's issues and guide the school's purchase of new servers. Impressed by Ednetics' tenacity in solving the problem, LWTech signed on as an Ednetics One™ customer. The IT director now has full phone system support—and more—at a price the school can afford.

“For me, the cost of Ednetics One, compared to having a qualified Cisco engineer on staff, is very reasonable. It works for me because I can't afford to pay someone full time who's as qualified as their technicians are.”

– Jeff Steffens, IT Director  
Lake Washington Institute of Technology



Lake Washington Institute of Technology  
Kirkland, Washington

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## Background

In 2010, Lake Washington Institute of Technology purchased a new Cisco phone system. All was well until staffing changes at LWTech’s telecom provider and in their own IT department inadvertently led to a lapse in the contract for both the licensing and operating system. “Cleaning up the licensing issue could have cost me almost six figures, which is close to half the IT department’s annual budget”, says IT Director Jeff Steffens.

“I was up nights losing sleep worrying about it,” says Steffens. “How was I going to tell the president of the college, ‘I’m in a bit of a pickle here. I need to put \$70,000 I don’t have into our phone system.’ I wasn’t looking forward to that conversation.”

Ednetics was able to find a solution to this unique problem and saved the college a significant amount of money. The school got its operating system updated, its licensing in order, was able to purchase new servers and, most importantly, form a partnership with Ednetics to receive 24/7 support from a team of skilled, easy-to-work-with phone system experts.

## Creating a Continuum of Support

“I needed support to fill the gap between the TAC support Cisco provided and the work my own team could do,” Steffens says. “Ednetics’ phone engineers are Cisco-certified and help with things like configuration and UCCX scripting. Cisco’s TAC team does great work at supporting the operating system. When they tell me I have a problem that’s beyond their scope, I call Ednetics and have them step in and fix it.”

Currently, the LWTech phone system is comprised of 450 handsets and an on-premises two-server stack. The servers run on domestic, off-the-shelf hardware using Cisco virtual machines, giving the IT department flexibility while keeping its costs low.

Steffens says that his team is able to put new phones into the system, install voicemail, import or delete users, and other day-to-day tasks.

“Cisco TAC is very good at handling the big issues, but if I need to do Tier 2 or 3 fixes like changing a calling pattern or reconfiguring my outgoing calls, that’s something TAC support doesn’t do,” he says. “The engineering behind these kinds of changes is beyond our team’s skills, so I need someone who has that deeper Cisco knowledge. That’s when I call our Ednetics One representative.”

## Rapid Resolution of Higher-Level Problems

Steffens remembers one morning when he got a call saying that no one could call into the college. He called Ednetics and told them he was having problems with inbound calls, but was still able to call out. Within 20 minutes, he says, Ednetics determined that the phone system’s UCCX server had lost communication with the gateway. The Ednetics One team accessed the system remotely, reestablished the link, and the phones were quickly back online.

“Right now, I’m having a problem with my UCCX servers locking up,” Steffens says. “Ednetics has taken on what, in a larger organization, would be the role of an in-house phone engineer. The beauty of it is that I don’t have to stress out about problems like this because Ednetics handles all these Tier 2 and 3 issues now. I



can call them 24/7 and get good support right away. If they can remote in to fix it, they will. If not, it's boots on the ground."

### **An Extra Hand That Doesn't Cost an Arm and Leg**

Steffens says his ability to "scale up" when—and only when—he needs extra hands on deck is one of the greatest benefits he gets from working with Ednetics. Sometimes, he says, the Ednetics team will also act as a liaison between his team and Cisco's TAC team.

"Ednetics can contact Cisco on our behalf and take care of any issue, large or small," he says. "If we have a problem with the operating system, our Ednetics people work directly with a Cisco engineer without us having to be involved in the conversation."

Steffens says that the support he gets from Ednetics enables a small IT department in a small but well-known Washington state college to dramatically upgrade the phone service it provides to faculty, staff, and students. "We're a small team, but, thanks to Cisco and to Ednetics, we're able to deliver a world-leading system designed for much larger enterprise-scale users. That's pretty fantastic!"

The only other way LWTech could have gotten anywhere near this same level of support, Steffens says, would have been to hire an in-house Cisco engineer, which he says he can neither afford nor justify. So on top of the initial money Ednetics saved the college, the support contract gives more value to Steffens' IT department by providing access to the trained phone experts it needs—without having to add to his head count.

### **Flexible, Dedicated, Friendly**

Add to that the fact that Ednetics, as a preferred Cisco vendor, is a known quantity, and is flexible enough to work with clients like LWTech who have a hybrid environment with on-prem, instead of hosted, servers. Pricing is flexible, too. At the moment, Steffens is talking with Ednetics about buying blocks of network engineer time to help him with improvements to their in-house systems.

Steffens also appreciates the fact that the Ednetics team is easy to talk to. "They actually speak my language. Some IT people use a lot of acronyms, and talk about work flows and frameworks. Ednetics isn't like that. They know how to relate to people who aren't phone system experts. Instead of jargon, they say things like 'Yeah, we'll get right on that,' and 'Don't worry, we've got you covered.'"

"The Ednetics One team stays on the phone with me until I feel comfortable. If I email them early in the afternoon, I hear back from them before I go home. And they always make me feel like we're an important client, even though we're small. You can't beat that."

*Ednetics brings IT services and solutions to education and public sector communities. We focus on opportunities to improve education and government settings through the use of advanced technologies. We have developed a comprehensive portfolio by working closely with customers to understand their needs. The Ednetics team includes contractors, specialized engineers, dedicated support, and project managers with an affinity for technology and a desire to be the best at what we do. We are inspired by how technology can help and we love making a difference.*