



# 5 essential benefits managed DEX solutions bring to higher education



As organizations across the public sector embrace digital transformation, enhancing employee experience and engagement is crucial to operational resilience. For higher education institutions, equipping faculty and staff with the right tools to work productively and without interruption improves job satisfaction and engagement for everyone involved in the student journey.

The complexities of higher ed campuses can make modernization a challenge. University CIOs, IT leaders, and CXOs must be able to support the unique needs of all organizations and departments on campus, which often operate in silos. Investing in a robust, customizable digital employee experience (DEX) solution results in a more cohesive campus ecosystem.

## Higher ed modernization challenges

One of the biggest hurdles for higher ed IT leaders in managing digital transformation is navigating the technology variance and specialization among the different populations and organizations on campus.

"If you think of your engineering schools, your business schools, your design and marketing schools, all those different areas of expertise, you're going to find the applications needed by the faculty are going to be very different," said Sean Applegate, chief technology officer at [Swish](#). "The performance requirements for their applications may vary widely — some may be more modern and web based, and others are legacy applications that run locally."

This range of capabilities can make it difficult for service desks to get a complete picture of the technology landscape on campus. Some faculty and staff may deal with frequent issues due to dated applications and equipment while others have smooth experiences working with newer operating systems.

Applications and devices that provide the expected experience are more likely to be used, and used properly. This serves all populations that make a higher ed campus successful. When the tools faculty rely on to do their jobs — delivering lectures, creating content, evaluating assignments, conducting research, and more — work well, frustration is

minimal and productivity increases. This fosters positive learning experiences for students, and satisfied students later become the engaged alumni that campuses rely on for continued success.

The first step toward mitigating complexities and creating more uniformly positive experiences is discovery. What are all the applications used on campus? Who is using them? How are they running? Comprehensive DEX tools can help answer these questions.

"A managed DEX solution can very quickly allow a CIO or their service desk to understand where devices and applications are working well and where devices might be challenged," Applegate said. "Are things fast? Are they failing, or does it take a long time to boot up? Are certain transactions within an application slow? Then you can dive much deeper into the application experience itself."

With 18 years of experience serving the federal government, Swish offers a deep level of expertise in integrating, customizing, and managing DEX solutions like [Riverbed Aternity](#). By providing a unified platform to improve observability and visibility into the root causes of IT issues no matter where faculty and staff are working — in offices, classrooms or at home — a DEX solution can positively impact five key areas:



### 1. More productivity and less downtime

Comprehensive monitoring helps IT service desks identify bottlenecks and resolve issues sooner, resulting in fewer disruptions. Managed DEX solutions can also be customized to automatically uncover unreported technology issues and enable automatic self-healing, reducing the burden on busy IT teams.

“All of us in IT typically have to deal with outages or performance issues, and in many cases, those things are outside of our direct control,” Applegate explained. “But it’s always better to know exactly when it happens, within seconds or minutes, and how broad the impact is to understand the scope and give real-time updates.”

### 2. Improved data-driven decision making

Detailed analytics provided by DEX solutions enable evidence-based decision making. Dashboards offer real-time visibility into workforce and user productivity, resource utilization, and more. For example, service desks can compare application response times to identify patterns and track down the root causes.

When insights are driven by data rather than user reports, IT leaders can be more proactive in problem solving, resource management, and strategic planning. Technology usage data can be further leveraged to create technology bundles, which simplify and accelerate user journeys.

### 3. Enhanced security

Thorough monitoring of digital interactions enables IT service desks to identify threats and anomalies more quickly and proactively protect sensitive data. Managed DEX solutions can also automatically discover when users may have loaded their devices with unapproved, non-IT-provided software and applications, which can introduce unexpected risks and compliance issues.

At the other end of the spectrum, IT leaders can detect whether devices are overloaded with security agents. “In those cases, we might see really poor device experience because they’re eating up a lot of the CPU, or RAM; and we might want to optimize settings for performance benefits,” Applegate said.



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Chief Technology Officer, Swish

#### 4. Increased efficiency and cost savings

Managed DEX solutions offer support — often round-the-clock — to help resolve technical disruptions. This results in greater operational efficiency and enables small IT teams to better serve thousands of staff and faculty who might be spread across numerous locations.

Streamlined and data-driven resource management, as well as unified observability into applications and devices, help IT teams reduce technical debt and associated costs. Automation capabilities “enable service desks to take things to the next level and solve problems proactively,” Applegate said. Automation can also put more control into users’ hands, reducing pressure on service desks and allowing them to operate more efficiently.

Furthermore, data related to user productivity, resource utilization, and more can be leveraged to cut costs or redirect funds. For example, “instead of guessing that we need licenses for 1,000 users of a specific application,” Applegate said, “we can measure real adoption within the department and

understand that we really only need 650, so you don’t overbuy.”

#### 5. Greater employee satisfaction

Ultimately, the aforementioned benefits — smooth, reliable digital experiences, and the ability to maximize productivity and minimize frustration — all create the foundation for high employee satisfaction. When faculty and staff have positive experiences, campuses are better able to attract and retain high-quality talent, optimize student learning experiences, and increase alumni engagement. Alumni are more likely to become donors when they can see campuses operating smoothly and feel their donations will be used effectively.

“In many cases, it’s the culture, the experience, and intangible things that keep people loyal to an organization,” Applegate said. “Colleges are fighting for expert talent, in an extremely competitive market, and the better user experience you can provide, the more likely they are to stay and be happy.”

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