

Case study

# Wisconsin Lutheran College

Milwaukee, Wisconsin



## Maintaining an educational focus

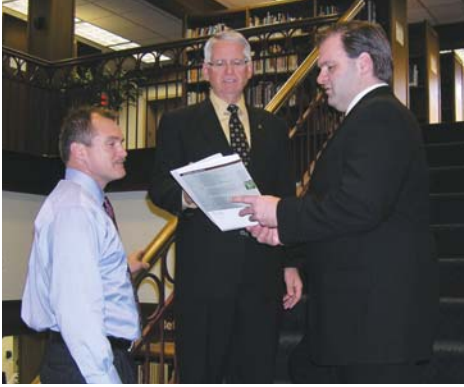
When a handful of dedicated Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod members gathered in the early 1970s to organize this liberal arts college, they had no facilities and no faculty. Within three years, Wisconsin Lutheran College was opened in rented facilities with a part-time faculty and two dozen students. The college purchased its original facilities in 1977 and continues to acquire additional property to accommodate the planned student body of the campus.

Today with the help of Johnson Controls, Inc., the independent college serves approximately 750 students and 150 faculty and staff in a comfortable and productive environment. Its 54-acre campus is the setting for 12 academic and student housing facilities. Eight of the facilities have been added since 1988, including the Schwan Library, a recreation complex, a center for arts and performance, the campus center, two resident halls and most recently, a science building completed in 2004 and an outdoor athletic complex in 2005. Additional student housing is available in 22 area residential properties owned by the college.

The college's growth and success brought many challenges with it. By the early 1990s, the college was struggling to keep up with day-to-day operations due to facility expansions, new regulations and increased enrollment. Having outgrown its staff and maintenance capabilities, the college was faced with an overwhelming backlog of maintenance work orders and impending capital improvements.

Rather than continue to spend time and money on personnel and maintenance issues, the college chose to outsource facility operations and maintenance to Johnson Controls in 1993. "Johnson Controls was willing to accommodate our needs and provided quick response, good management skills and expertise in many areas," says Duane Schlomer, vice president of finance, Wisconsin Lutheran College. "The personnel management aspect was especially appealing and the transition of college employees to the Johnson Controls staff was very smooth."





“Students are the focus for Wisconsin Lutheran College,” states President Timothy J. Kriewall. “Creating a safe and secure environment is vital to an overall positive educational experience.”

“When students and their families step onto the campus and see the well-kept grounds and facilities, they immediately feel welcome, safe and at home.”

**DR. TIMOTHY J. KRIEWALL**  
**PRESIDENT**  
**WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE**



The Schwan Concert Hall inside the Center for Arts and Performance, one of six facilities added to the college campus since 1992.

## Lower operating costs, better financial performance

Now entering the 14th year of continuous service, the \$1.6 million-per-year Facilities Management agreement with Johnson Controls includes everything from preventative maintenance to housekeeping, event preparation, custodial services, grounds keeping, plant operations, materials management, mail room and security services. Under the agreement Johnson Controls established an onsite 43-member team to respond to each facility’s needs, and provide scheduled building maintenance and property management.

A computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) is used to initiate all work orders that need to be executed in a time sequence manner. “We have become more proactive, in that small problems are dealt with before they become big issues,” states Schlomer. The backlog of work orders is no longer an issue, and the new preventative maintenance programs have increased operations efficiency, equipment life span, and minimized downtime.

Throughout the college’s rapid growth, outsourcing facility operations has proven to be beneficial both academically and operationally. The college staff is able to focus on providing quality education, rather than worrying about facility management issues, and simultaneously benefits from an increased level of operations management expertise. “It also provides support at the corporate level by relieving our business office

of training and human resource issues, allowing them to focus on growth and development of the college itself,” indicates Schlomer.

## Remaining part of the team

Based on proven performance, Wisconsin Lutheran College signed a new five-year contract with Johnson Controls in July 2007. “We have an excellent relationship with the Johnson Controls team, in which we work closely to address the needs and issues on campus,” says Schlomer. “I consider them part of my team, and as such, they review expansion and construction plans and make suggestions with respect to maintenance concerns.”

The college’s ongoing mission is to provide the best service possible to its students, faculty and staff. This applies to facilities and grounds as well as to academia. In doing so, Johnson Controls has been asked to participate, along with the college staff, in training programs focused on improving the quality of service institutions. “As we continue to grow, I try very hard to integrate Johnson Controls into the college environment,” says Schlomer.



The 14-year partnership between Wisconsin Lutheran College and Johnson Controls has resulted in a consistent visual message throughout the 54-acre campus.