



Lees-McRae College relieves its IT infrastructure of server sprawl and goes all-flash with StarWind HyperConverged Appliance (HCA)



About the Company

Lees-McRae College is a private, residential college that awards baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Located in North Carolina, US, and founded over a hundred years ago, the college focuses on experiential learning and offers bachelor's degree completion programs online and in surrounding communities.

Company Profile

Higher education

Contact Person

Ben Holtsclaw, Director of Technology Services

Problem

The organization sought hyperconvergence to reduce the number of servers and achieve redundancy.

Solution

With StarWind HCA, the organization achieved server consolidation and a level of redundancy unseen before at a reasonable price.

Problem

Before introducing **StarWind HyperConverged Appliance (HCA)** into its IT infrastructure, **Lees-McRae College** had six standalone Hyper-V hosts with which problems had begun to escalate. All servers had reached the end of life support long ago and spinning disks frequently failed. Also, the original infrastructure provided no failover. If a host machine ceased to function, its virtual machines (VMs) remained offline. If a host were to crash or the RAID was lost because of multiple failed disks, the organization would have to retrieve backups. Host maintenance involved the migration of each VM from the host to one of the other five hosts, installing host updates, rebooting it, and then migrating VMs back. The college did not have cluster storage and for that reason all VMs moved from host to host using a Shared Nothing Live Migration feature. Since the old servers worked with 1Gbps NICs, migration was always a slow and tedious process. Finally, the organization had become victim to host server sprawl and a low server consolidation ratio. As a result, it cost the college the loss of space, power, and money.

Solution

Turning to the analysis of products on the virtualization market, Lees-McRae College was looking not just for a solution to its IT infrastructure problems but a partner whom they could trust. The cost savings and quality of support from StarWind were decisive factors for choosing StarWind HCA. Thanks to one hyperconverged platform, the organization received server consolidation by moving from six spinning disk servers to a two-node cluster with all-flash arrays. The server sprawl problem was resolved and now Lees-McRae College has more resources but with a much smaller footprint. In addition, StarWind HCA provides a level of redundancy that they didn't have before. Should one node in the cluster happen to fail, the other node will immediately pick up the workload. Host server maintenance is accomplished quickly and easily. All VMs can be flushed from one host to the other in a short amount of time. By choosing StarWind HCA over a traditional SAN with two compute nodes, Lees-McRae College saved more than \$13,000 in upfront costs. Also, StarWind Support Team went beyond and above the organization's expectations providing comprehensive assistance in implementation and cutover.



The StarWind HCA has worked out extremely well. I see StarWind as a very pragmatic solution. It meets all of our needs at a price that fits our budget.

Ben Holtsclaw, Director of Technology Services