

Four higher education technology trends for 2026

Prepare your institution to offer students and faculty the campus of the future.

Colleges and universities feel the pressure to prioritize network modernization. Digital learning expectations, security risks, budget constraints and staffing challenges make it essential to choose the right technology and partner. Future readiness for student expectations, research and teaching all hinge on a high-performance network, strengthened security and equitable access to learning.

Here are four key trends to expect in 2026:

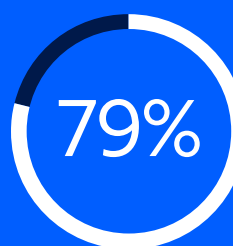
1. Threats to school data and systems grow

Higher education remains a high-value target for cyberattacks that threaten enrollment, finances and research access. Zero-trust architectures, stronger identity management and managed security services help you protect your institution's critical systems and sensitive data. Take steps to:

- Reduce breach risks with continuous verification and strict access control.
- Improve operational resilience through proactive threat monitoring.
- Safeguard student, staff and research data to maintain trust and meet regulatory requirements.



\$3.8M The average cost of a data breach in the education industry as of 2025.¹



of cybersecurity and privacy professionals in higher education say they don't have enough staff to meet their goals.²

The Spectrum Business® advantage

Face the current threat landscape confidently with advanced cybersecurity solutions.

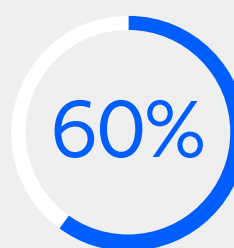
Executive brief:

[Protect your campus from cyberthreats](#)

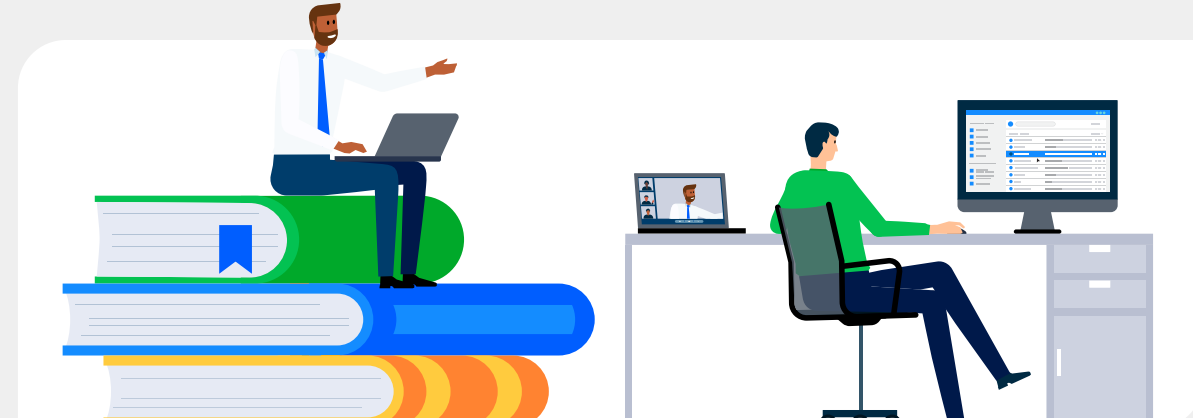
2. Modern education requires a modern network

Rising device usage, hybrid learning demands and research-intensive workloads are pushing school networks to capacity. Prioritize resilient, secure, high-bandwidth connectivity to power digital learning, institutional operations and educational technology across campus and beyond. Your investments should:

- Support reliable, campus-wide digital learning and collaboration.
- Strengthen security by reducing vulnerabilities in aging networks.
- Improve the student, faculty, staff and researcher experience with fast, consistent internet connectivity.



of campus CTOs agree that legacy infrastructure is hindering their institution's ability to be innovative.³



of campus CTOs at public universities reported in 2025 that their institution added a substantial number of new online and hybrid course options over the last year.⁴

The Spectrum Business advantage

Streamline planning, implementation, management and support for your smart campus.

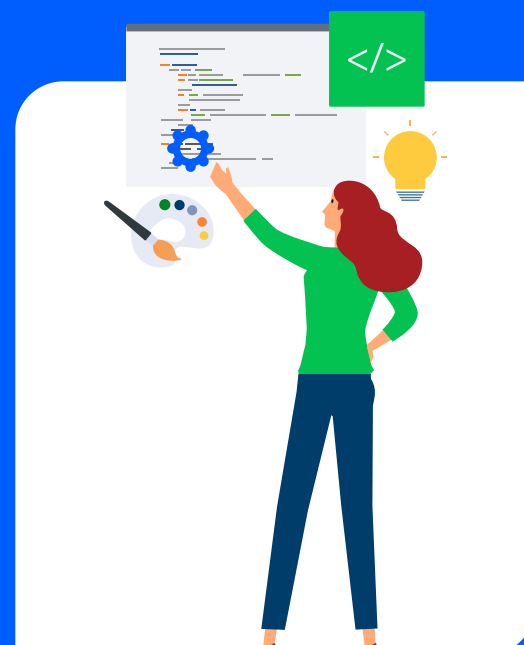
Video:

[Managed solutions for higher education](#)

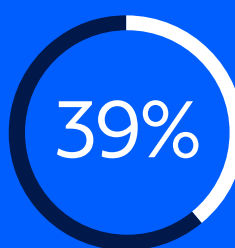
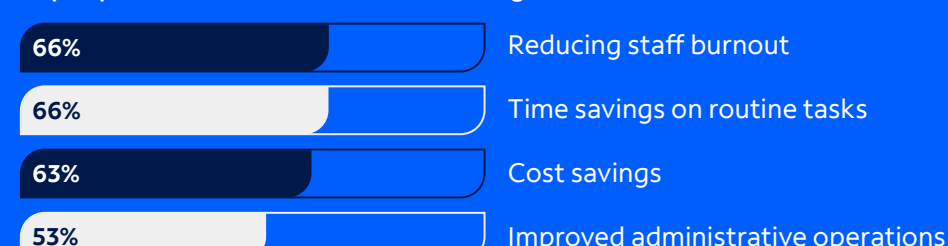
3. AI-enabled personalization shifts priorities

AI tools are rapidly reshaping instruction, student support and academic operations. Enable adaptive content delivery, real-time support for students and individualized learning pathways aligned to student priorities. Help faculty scale feedback, improve accessibility and reduce administrative burdens. Use AI to:

- Enhance individualized learning and boost student success.
- Streamline faculty workloads to reduce burnout and aid teaching.
- Expand accessibility to support diverse learners.



Top reported benefits of AI rollout at higher education institutions:⁵



of higher education instructors already use GenAI.⁶

The Spectrum Business advantage

Understand the key trends and developments affecting your institution's IT investments.

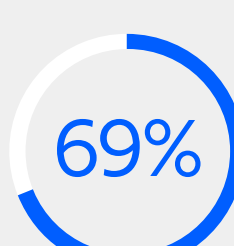
White paper:

[5 key trends in campus technology](#)

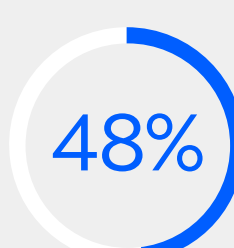
4. Cost and complexity drive streamlined operations

As staffing shortages and complex systems create bottlenecks, institutions increasingly rely on cloud platforms and managed services providers. The strategy helps simplify management, scale resources and ensure uptime for vital learning applications and environments. You can:

- Lower IT overhead by entrusting maintenance to expert providers.
- Scale resources seamlessly to meet peak academic demands.
- Boost reliability with an infrastructure that can be fully managed or co-managed to suit your institution's needs.



of higher education institutions use a hybrid cloud architecture.⁷



of campus CTOs say their organization considers moving to the cloud a high or essential priority.⁸

The Spectrum Business advantage

Empower campus IT to keep up with evolving connectivity needs — without costly investments.

White paper:

[3 ways managed services can enhance campus IT](#)

Modernize your institution with Spectrum Business

Spectrum Business, a Charter Communications brand, provides the broad portfolio of managed services and solutions colleges and universities need to stay ahead — all backed by industry-leading service-level agreements and 100% US-based support, available 24/7. Together we can build a future-ready, secure and connected campus, empowering your institution to focus on learning, innovation and student success.

[Learn more](#)

1. "Cost of a Data Breach Report 2025: The AI Oversight Gap," Ponemon Institute and IBM Security, July 2025.
 2. Nicole Muscanell, "2025 EDUCAUSE Cybersecurity and Privacy Workforce in Higher Education," EDUCAUSE, June 9, 2025.
 3. "2025 Survey of Campus Chief Technology/Information Officers," Inside Higher Ed and Hanover Research, 2025.
 4. Ibid.
 5. "Higher Ed Innovation Index 2025: The Technology Acceleration Paradox," Transact and CBORD, July 2025.
 6. "McGraw Hill Global Education Insights Report: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Future of Education in the Age of AI - United States Higher Education," McGraw Hill, 2025.
 7. "Higher Ed Innovation Index 2025."
 8. "2025 Survey of Campus Chief Technology/Information Officers."

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