CASE STUDY: Gordon–Conwell Theological Seminary

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

How Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary uses Send Word Now

To Keep its Campuses Safe

Gordon–Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) is the fifth largest theological seminary in North America, and offers more than 19 degrees, including the Master of Divinity, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry, and a wide range of specialized master's degrees. The seminary's main campus is based in Hamilton, Massachusetts, and it has three other campuses in Boston, MA; Charlotte, NC; and Jacksonville, FL. When something goes wrong, it can be difficult to relay messages and coordinate response efforts among these locations. Read on to find out how the school's public safety team depends on Send Word Now's on-demand notification and response system to keep communication simple when emergencies occur.

Communication Made Simple

The seminary's Director of Public Safety, Cabot Dodge, is based in Hamilton and is responsible for ensuring safety on all of the seminary's campuses. He works as part of the Student Life Services team to manage Campus Safety, ensure compliance with state and federal laws, and protect the livelihood of students, visitors, faculty, and staff.

Dodge, along with the seminary's Director of IT, Amy Donovan, uses Send Word Now's notification platform to send messages to various segments of the school community any time that there is an emergency affecting one or more campuses. "During a major catastrophe, we can formulate our response very quickly using this system," says Dodge. "We can reach more than 2,000 voice, text, and e-mail contact points across the seminary's four campuses with just the click of a button. And if critical decisions need to be made, we have the ability to pull the whole Leadership Team together within just seconds, using the system's Conference Bridge feature."

Put To The Test

The seminary has depended on Send Word Now for on-demand notification during many critical events already, including weather-related emergencies and power outages. During snowstorms in Charlotte and Hamilton, Dodge used the system to keep faculty, staff and students off the road and to alert them of dangerous icicles on campus. And when the water supply in the Town of Hamilton was tested positive for a chemical in 2008, he used Send Word Now to keep members of the GCTS campus community well-informed until the water was deemed safe to use.

GCTS conducts yearly drills and tests of its Send Word Now emergency alert notification system and emergency response procedures. In 2011, the campus simulated a tornado drill and used Send Word Now to test all of its response procedures. "We used the system to test everything in real time, and to get our team members, students, faculty and staff accustomed to the alerts. We want them to be aware of what to expect in an actual emergency situation. The drill was very successful, and demonstrated our ability to reach out to everyone in the community when time matters," says Dodge.

Managing Campus Alerts

GCTS uses Send Word Now for emergency situations only, in order to ensure that recipients know to take messages seriously when they do come. "We don't want to overuse the system," explains Dodge. "Some schools send several alerts each week, to the point that students start to ignore them. When members of our community get messages from Send Word Now, they know that it's important information."

The seminary also requires all students, faculty, and staff to have at least one point of contact in the system, so that they can be reached during an emergency. "Every member of our campus community is in our system, and they can customize the amount of information that we have beyond a basic email address. Using Send Word Now's self-update feature, we can allow campus community members to make these changes frequently. That keeps our information up-to-date," says Dodge.

Why Send Word Now

Dodge explains that Send Word Now's simplicity, value, and ease of use made it stand out among its competitors. "Send Word Now is far less complicated than other systems, and it is the best system on the market," he says.

"Send Word Now's ease of use is very important," he continues. "It's easy to maintain our contact database; it's easy to send a message out, and there are plenty of options to customize all of our alerts. You don't have time to waste on constructing messages when seconds count; I don't want to ever worry about missing a step when I'm in the midst of responding to an emergency. When I'm using Send Word Now, I know that I won't."

> "I don't want to ever worry about missing a step when I'm in the midst of responding to an emergency."
>
> **-Cabot Dodge**
> *Director of Public Safety*
> *Gordon-Conwell Theological*
> *Seminary*

Additionally, Dodge has found Send Word Now's customer support team to be "fantastic." "There is never an issue when I need to speak with my account manager or customer support representative," he explains, concluding, "The system, the support, the whole package – Send Word Now was the right choice four years ago, and it remains the right choice for us today."

The Send Word Now Advantage

By tailoring its services to the needs of its customers, Send Word Now consistently provides innovative notification solutions that outmatch its competitors' offerings. Through its BlackBerry and iPhone integrations, Conference Bridge functionality, and unique features such as multi-lingual alerts, customers can take advantage of Send Word Now's customizable platform to maximize their communication efforts. And on top of its robust software features, Send Word Now offers best-in-class customer support services that just can't be beat.

Send Word Now is the leading provider of on-demand alerting and response services for both routine and emergency communication. The easy-to-use, web-based emergency notification service is used by government agencies, municipalities, universities, non-profit organizations and businesses, including many Fortune 500 companies, to ensure fast, effective, two-way communication in real-time. Send Word Now's Alert Tracer® provides a full audit trail of messages sent and received for after-action reporting and follow-up. Designed to reach anyone, anywhere, anytime, with any device over any type of connection, Send Word Now's mass notification system is capable of transmitting hundreds of thousands of voice and text messages in minutes.