

MICROSOFT AZURE SOLUTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES

Transform the Student Experience

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RIISING TO MEET THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Invest in Technology that Centers Students

The world has changed dramatically over the past two years, and leaders in higher education have recognized the urgency of adopting and utilizing cloud technologies. Not only can cloud help modernize legacy on-premises infrastructure—and help you save money—but it can also bring advanced benefits, such as tools to enhance student learning experiences.

Gartner recently reported that interest in traditional four-year degrees has been waning, as more students question their value.* Those students who are already enrolled have reported struggling to stay focused during the pandemic. As hybrid and online learning

grow in popularity and students become choosier about their school experience, your institution requires the flexibility and adaptability to respond to the changing landscape. In order to connect with today's students and those of the future, you need a strong foundation in the cloud on which to build an environment that truly engages both students and faculty.

We've put together this guide to help you learn how our Azure services can help you solve your cloud challenges and take advantage of the technology to build a more student-centered education experience.

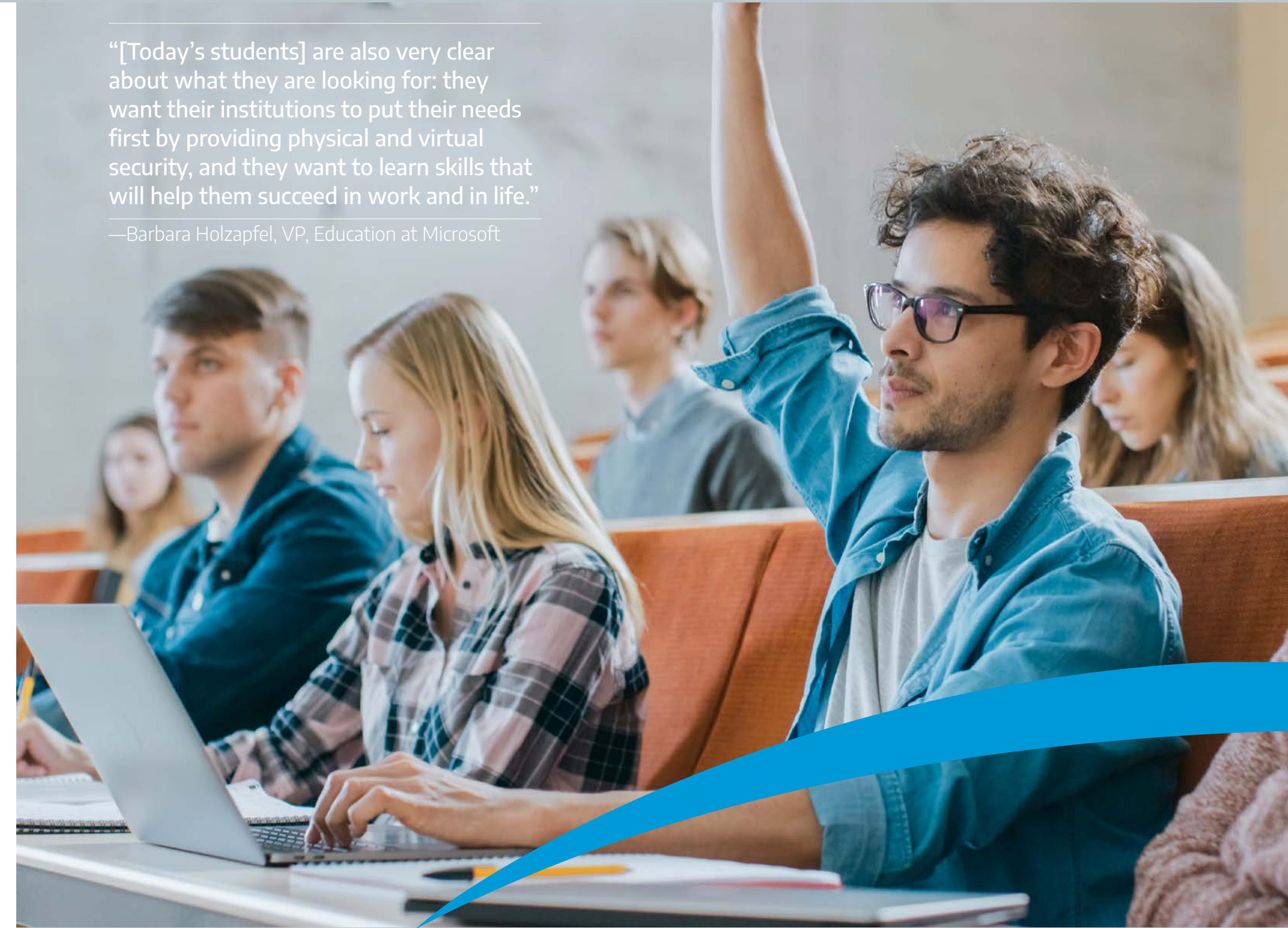
“[Today's students] are also very clear about what they are looking for: they want their institutions to put their needs first by providing physical and virtual security, and they want to learn skills that will help them succeed in work and in life.”

—Barbara Holzapfel, VP, Education at Microsoft

*Top Technology Trends Impacting Higher Education in 2021 by Gartner



MICROSOFT AZURE HIGHER EDUCATION GUIDE





THE CLOUD READINESS CHALLENGE

A Trusted Partner Can Guide Your First Steps

Higher education institutions are taking a fresh look at cloud technologies and exploring how they can move their existing on-premises technology investments to the cloud. Their IT leaders are keen to take a strategic approach, which means more than doing a straight migration of existing processes to the cloud. To truly benefit from cloud technologies, you need to look at various aspects of your current IT investments from both an infrastructure and application perspective.

- How can you ensure your path to the cloud is optimized for your organization?
- What do you do if your IT team lacks the skills to build a sophisticated cloud solution?

That's where the team of Cloud Advisors at Connection comes in. Hiring paid consultants to help you strategize can be expensive, but we offer a range of complimentary services to help you get started. Our architectural reviews and assessments cover everything from best practices to security and readiness. You can learn more about our [Cloud Advisory Services](#).

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HOW TO OVERCOME VENDOR SPRAWL

Too Many Cooks Can Spoil the Soup

Like many colleges and universities, you are likely adopting cloud technologies piece by piece. You may even be using several different vendors to manage different service areas, such as migration, deployment, optimization, backup, disaster recovery, and managed services. Many institutions are now learning that cloud vendor sprawl can create unnecessary complexity. What works in one individual deployment may fail to communicate properly to the larger infrastructure, resulting in:

- Inconsistent security between cloud and on-premises environments
- An unreliable user experience for staff, faculty, and students

Every institution needs a seamless cloud solution to provide a truly student-centered experience, allowing students and faculty to access a consistent, secure user experience no matter where they are.

Connection is your one-stop shop for all Azure (and multi-cloud) services—meaning we can help streamline and manage all the pieces of your cloud. As a Microsoft Cloud Solution Provider (CSP), we offer three levels of complimentary support. And on top of our complimentary Azure services, we can also guide you through migration, deployment, and optimization. As an Azure Expert Managed Service Provider with capabilities approved by Microsoft, we can keep your cloud running smoothly so you can focus on strategic initiatives.

Optimize Your Licensed Software

Additionally, we have a strong licensing support background with one-of-kind licensing optimization services, so you can be sure you're never overpaying for software licenses.



Cloud vendor sprawl creates unnecessary complexity that can lead to issues such as inconsistent security and unreliable user experiences.



“If it worked, we didn’t bother changing it... So, you end up with systems that are in fact 30 or even 40 years old that are still out there with a lot of institutions.”

—Allan Chen, CIO at Muhlenberg College

MIGRATION MADE MANAGEABLE

Move to a More Flexible Future

Once your institution has begun to make the shift to the cloud, it’s time to look at older apps running on legacy on-premises systems. Many are still running older home-grown applications on legacy on-premises systems. It’s time to go from dark to cloud—and avoid breaking the bank with costly hardware refreshes to keep things operational.

- Do you need help figuring out how to migrate or rebuilding a legacy application in the cloud?
- Does your IT team have the bandwidth or advanced skills to make that happen?

It’s time to turn to a trusted partner.

Connection has earned Azure advanced specialization in Windows and SQL Server migration, which means our architects have the experience and knowledge to help your institution migrate your entire infrastructure—even home-grown apps—to flexible, agile cloud solutions. With our Azure Migrate Assessment, we can help you evaluate your existing on-premises environment and consider which infrastructure, applications, and data to migrate. Make the move to cloud with us as your guide, and avoid costly downtime or mistakes.

CLOSE THE IT SKILL GAP WITH MANAGED SERVICES

Make an MSP Part of Your Team

Higher education is not alone in struggling to overcome the cloud skill gap. There are thousands of unfilled cloud IT positions across the United States, and this number will only grow as more organizations take advantage of cloud technologies. With skilled IT candidates in such high demand, hiring a cloud engineer could be more than most institutions' budgets can bear. But cloud platforms are now an essential part of the modern student experience.

- Do you have the time to skill up resources to meet current demand?
- How will you balance the technology you need and budget you have?

One cost-advantageous solution is to partner with a Managed Service Provider (MSP). When you partner with an MSP like Connection, you get access to all of our experts without having to add full-time resources to your internal headcount. This can also help lift some weight off your IT team so they can focus on supporting your strategic initiatives to build student-centered experiences.

With an MSP, you not only get experts to help manage migration and deployment, but you also have our team actively monitoring your environment and responding to issues as they arise. In the event of a crisis, you can reach our support team 24x7 by phone, chat, or email.

Our Experts Are Your Experts

As a Microsoft Azure Expert MSP, we have the skillsets, knowledge, and experience you can count on to manage your entire cloud lifecycle. From handling workload migrations to constructing customized cloud solutions, our experts can ensure your Azure environment is working the way you need it to—at a cost that won't break your budget.



As a Microsoft Azure Expert Managed Services Provider, we can guide you through migration, deployment, and optimization.



EMPOWER STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF TO ACHIEVE MORE

As you move toward building a more student-centered education experience at your institution, the guidance of a trusted partner can be invaluable. The experts at Connection not only know the ins and outs of Microsoft Azure, but we also know higher education. We're here to help you develop the right solutions that will meet the evolving needs of your entire institution for years to come.



For more information about our Azure Services, contact our team of experts today!

Public Sector Solutions
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