

# The State of Networking & Security in Higher Education

Insights from 117 IT leaders and C-level executives across Higher Education



INSIGHT #1

## Cybersecurity is the #1 Network Challenge



**52%**  
Cybersecurity and Risk Exposure

**48%**  
Operational and Infrastructure Challenges

Security and operational challenges are emerging at equal intensity.

INSIGHT #2

## Confidence in Breach Prevention Is Divided



**50%**  
Confident

**50%**  
Unsure or Not confident

This reflects differences in visibility as much as capability.

INSIGHT #3

## Outages Still Disrupt Learning



**50%**  
Experience Network outages monthly or more often

**11%**  
Experience Network outages weekly or daily

Frequent disruptions point to deeper structural instability.

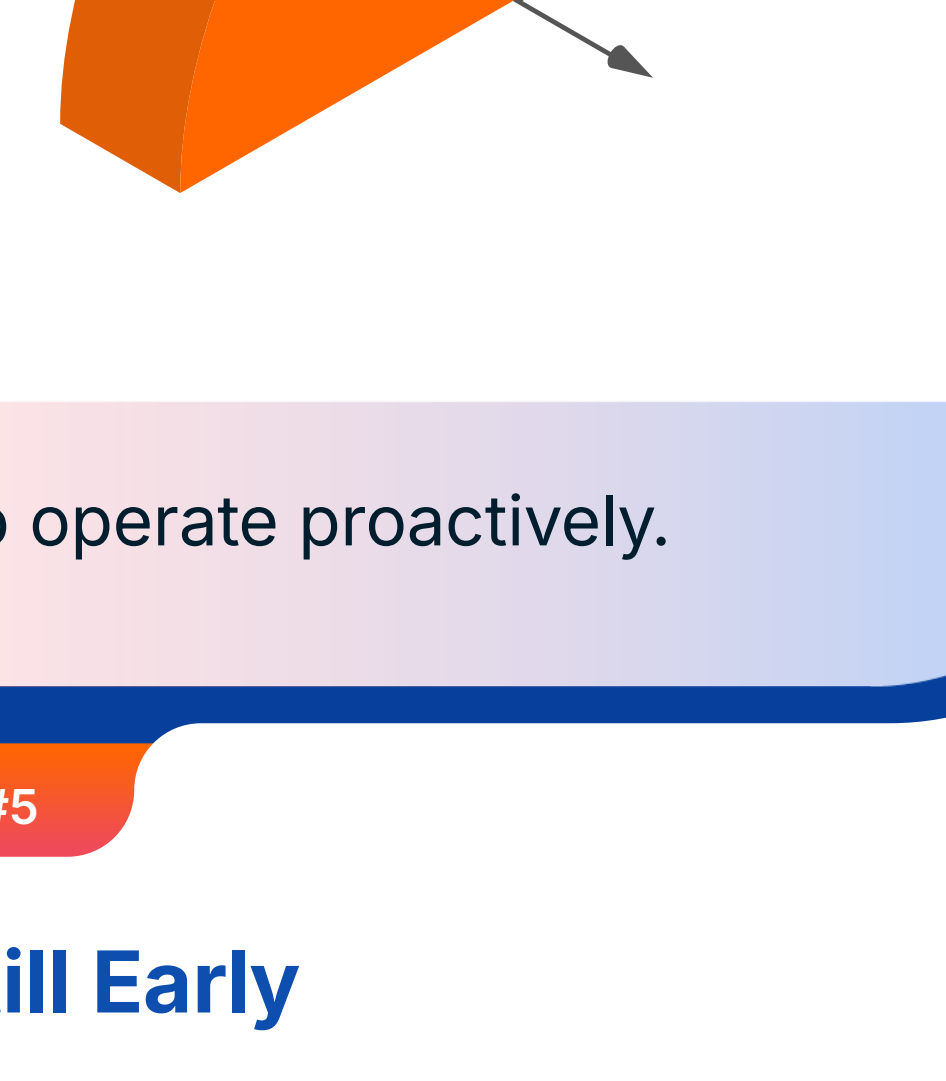
INSIGHT #4

## IT Teams are Severely Understaffed

**67%**  
Understaffed or Critically Understaffed

**27%**  
Full staffed but constantly firefighting

**6%**  
Fully staffed and comfortable



Most teams lack the capacity to operate proactively.

INSIGHT #5

## Zero Trust Adoption is Still Early



**33%** Partially implemented

**22%** Aware but no concrete plans

**20%** Planning to implement within 12 months

**18%** Fully aligned and enforced

**7%** Unfamiliar with Zero Trust

Nearly half of institutions are not meaningfully on the journey.

INSIGHT #6

## Infrastructure Complexity Impedes Zero Trust Adoption

**31%** Complexity of existing infrastructure

**28%** Lack of internal expertise or resources

**18%** Budget constraints / competing priorities

**14%** Limited executive support

**9%** Unsure what implementation entails



Complexity and lack of expertise are deeply intertwined.

## What These Insights Reveal?

Individually highlights

Together points to

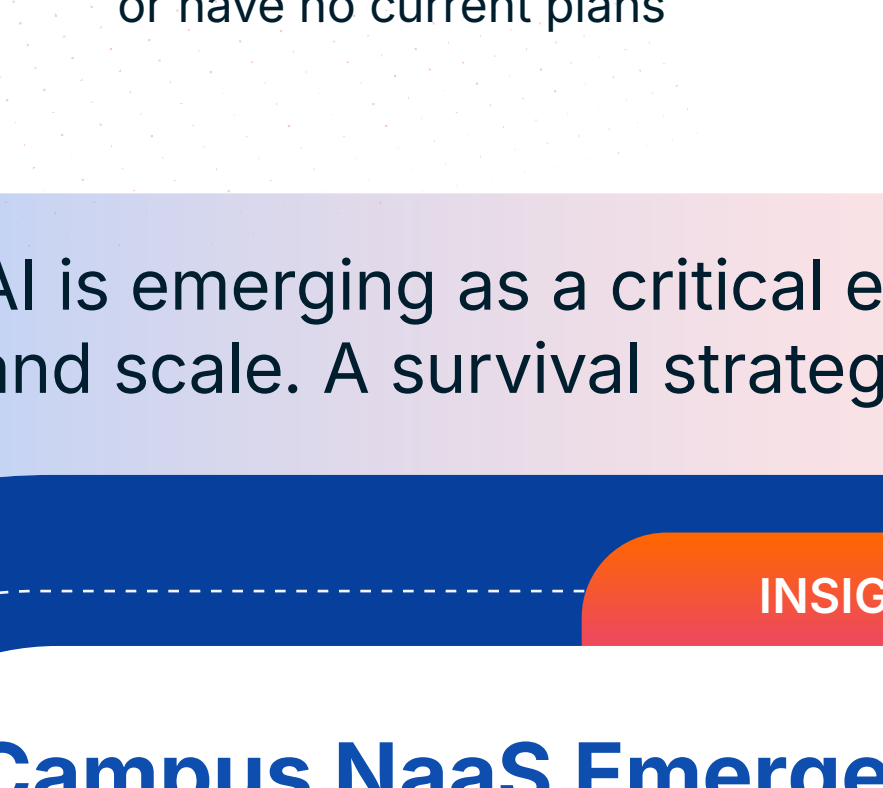
Specific Challenges

Deeper Structural Pressures

CAMPUS NETWORKING

INSIGHT #7

## Built-in Security and Operational Simplicity are High Priorities



**40%** Stronger built-in security

**28%** Simpler operations and automation

**6%** Easier onboarding of devices and users

**13%** Improved performance and reliability

**13%** Lower total cost of ownership

IT leaders are prioritizing built-in security and simpler operations.

INSIGHT #8

## AI is Becoming Essential to Campus Networks

**65%**  
Say AI is essential or planned

**35%**  
Say AI is not essential or have no current plans



AI is emerging as a critical enabler for managing complexity and scale. A survival strategy for understaffed campuses.

INSIGHT #9

## Campus NaaS Emerges as a Strategic Direction



**91%**  
Are open to or adopting AI-powered NaaS

**9%**  
Not open to AI-powered NaaS at this time

Institutions are exploring new architectures to address these combined challenges.

These insights are not isolated, they reflect a structural shift in campus networking. Get your copy of the [Leadership Survey Report](#) to explore the full analysis.

## The State of Networking & Security in Higher Education

Insights from IT leaders and C-level executives in Higher Education



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