



# Emergency Stations at La Cité College

## THE CHALLENGE

The large campus touts ten interconnected buildings and six parking lots set on 60 acres of land. Securing this campus is no easy feat.

## THE SOLUTION

Aiphone emergency towers with IX Series intercom stations enable a distressed student to directly have a two-way conversation with campus officers.



“I was happy to know we’d have a high-quality, functional system in place soon after I’d started the job.”

**Martin Gregoire**  
Campus Security Director La Cité College



**IX Series**

# The Situation

Students at Ottawa’s French language college – La Cité – are protected by a multi-layer security system. From the time they arrive to one of six parking lots, to roaming within the campus’ 10 interconnected buildings, **students have access to reliable security.**

## THE CHALLENGE

Opened in 1995, the La Cité campus is Ontario’s largest French-language college with over 5,000 students. It offers 140 postsecondary programs with degrees ranging from architecture to security management. The large campus touts ten interconnected buildings and six parking lots set on 60 acres of land. Securing this campus is no easy feat.

## THE SOLUTION

The most recent addition to the security system is 15 parking lot emergency towers from Aiphone. The towers with IX Series intercom stations enable a distressed student to directly have a two-way conversation with campus officers. The intercom’s embedded camera provides officers with live video to more accurately assess and respond to a situation.

Rock Levesque, project manager for the Ottawa-based security integrator, ComNet Networks and Security, said the new towers replaced previous call stations created by a member of the campus IT department.

The previous stations only allow one-way communication. Pushing the emergency button initiated a siren that was so loud students had difficulty hearing the security staff. Also, the stations often didn’t work.

“It defeated the purpose of having a system,” Levesque said. “The only thing guards would know is that there was a call from a specific station. An officer would be dispatched having no idea of the situation. And we could spend a week repairing the stations with no guarantee the next day they would still work.”

## Upgrades to an Emergency System


Concerned about student safety, college administrators decided to upgrade the entire system last fall. About the same time, Martin Gregoire took over as campus security director after 24 years in protective services at the University of Ottawa.

“They asked my opinion of the plan,” he said. “I told them security is a lot like an onion with its many layers. They made the right decision to start on the exterior and work their way in. I was happy to know we’d have a high-quality, functional system in place soon after I’d started the job.”

La Cité also uses a customized mobile app enabling students to contact security, receive notifications, and perform other non-emergency functions. Gregoire said he also views the AppArmor program as a valuable security layer that augments, rather than replaces, the emergency towers.

“We can have the best plans on paper, but it’s when you get hit that you realize what tools are missing or not working. We need to know we will eventually be hit and plan for it now.”

**Martin Gregoire**  
Campus Security Director La Cité College



“Security is a lot like an onion with its many layers. They made the right decision to start on the exterior and work their way in.”

**Martin Gregoire**  
Campus Security Director,  
La Cité College

“Getting rid of the towers would be a mistake,” Gregoire said “Our towers are connected via landline. They are always on and you can’t lose the signal as you can with a cellular-based system. The towers have no batteries that can die. And security officers immediately know the precise location of a tower call.”

## Considering Every Security Angle

Gregoire knows about the loss of cellular service. He was at the University of Ottawa in 2014 when a gunman in the nearby Canadian Parliament building led to a campus lockdown and a temporary loss of cellular service. The campus’ emergency towers helped to fill the communications gap.

La Cité’s emergency towers have the standard blue light that makes them easy to spot at night or in foggy conditions. The intercoms feature two call buttons for different priority levels. An assistance button enables students to seek directions or report a crime, while an emergency button is for summoning immediate help.

Levesque said weather-resistant paging horns attached to the stations are used by officers, provided by Securitas, to provide one-way mass notification information during a lockdown or other emergencies.

This spring, the campus will use optional CCTV arms on four towers to mount Axis 360° multipixel cameras. This will provide the security team with more detailed views of the most distant parking lots. Additional Axis PTZ and bullet cameras are mounted on building exteriors. A Genetec access control system is used throughout campus buildings. There are also panic buttons installed in hallways and some restrooms.

Gregoire is a strong proponent of highly-layered security systems and advanced planning. He supports his ideas with a quote from former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson.

“Reporters asked Tyson if he had a plan for a fight in which he had been knocked down,” Gregoire said. “He said, ‘Yeah, I had a plan until I got hit.’ We can have the best plans on paper but it’s when you get hit that you realize what tools are missing or not working. We need to know we will eventually be hit and plan for it now.”

Both Gregoire and Levesque said the next planned campus security upgrade will involve the installation of emergency towers and stations outside buildings and inside on each floor near stairwells. Budgets will likely require installations to be completed one building at a time.

**Try before you buy!**  
See Aiphone solutions in action.

CLICK HERE  
TO REQUEST  
A DEMO



**Submit your Aiphone  
success story!**

CLICK HERE  
TO PROVIDE  
BRIEF DETAILS



**SECURITY  
COMMUNICATION  
SOLUTIONS**

[aiphone.com](http://aiphone.com)

**Customer Service  
and Technical Support**  
**(800) 692-0200**

Headquarters – Redmond, WA  
East Office – Cherry Hill, NJ  
Canada Office – Laval, QC

**WATCH | CONNECT | LIKE | FOLLOW**



Aiphone Case Study:  
La Cité College

© 2020 Aiphone Corp.  
All rights reserved.  
Designed in the USA.