

# COLLEGE

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### Campus Scene



## Submeters Help Cut Costs Without Cutting Quality

Rising education costs, coupled with tighter operating budgets, are driving colleges and universities to scrutinize their energy usage patterns. As one of an institution's most basic needs and, at the same time, one of its single largest expenses, power is typically viewed as a fixed cost. Growing numbers of institutions are discovering that, with the proper tools, energy costs can be effectively managed to reduce expenses and improve the bottom line — all without slashing programs, increasing tuition, or cutting corners on educational quality.

The tool that provides this energy insight is the electric submeter. This inexpensive device easily installs behind the primary billing meter at the electrical service entrance to monitor energy use for an entire building, individual department, or specific circuit. Many schools are using submeters for departmental budget allocation, identifying energy inefficiencies, and common-area and event metering, as well as shifting energy loads and lowering demand charges during peak hours when energy prices are highest. Residence and foodservice facilities are prime candidates for submeters, which allow costs to be allocated and billed according to actual usage, not just square footage of floor space.

Submeters can be installed virtually any-

where needed, communicating to any desired monitoring location via the facility's existing Ethernet backbone, wireless infrastructure, or other data highway, to factor water, steam, BTUs, and other compatible parameters into the facility's comprehensive energy management program. At the enterprise level, these devices can be used to assist in the development and verification of energy conservation initiatives, such as the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Green Building Rating System.

With educational institutions today facing mounting financial pressure, controlling the bottom line is key to maintaining current programs and keeping education affordable. Increasingly, submeters are being used to hold users accountable and to identify other energy conservation measures in which to invest. Once savings are realized, they remain in the budget of the facility department to re-invest into additional energy savings programs and electrical upgrades.

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