



## Could this be the answer to the skills and financial challenges in Higher Education IT?

*“Necessity is the mother of invention”* said an age-old proverb made famous by the Greek philosopher Plato. This rings particularly true in the current climate of higher education, when institutions are grappling with the dual pressures of shrinking budgets and an ever-widening digital skills gap. The demand for advanced IT, engineering, and technology expertise has never been greater, yet the resources to attract and retain such talent are increasingly scarce.

But there is a movement we have witnessed firsthand within our strong community of 300+ institutions, particularly in regional and remote areas. Our customers, empowered by the simplicity of our platform are taking innovative approaches to turn these challenges into opportunities. A stellar example is the student-powered IT model developed by Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T). Austin Wall, Support Systems Administrator, Missouri S&T IT End User Engineering Team, shared their story at the North American AppsAnywhere SUMMIT Canada in May 2025.



### Snapshot

**Client:**

Missouri University of Science and Technology

**Location:** Rolla, Missouri**Total Students:** 7,000+**AppsAnywhere Customer Since:** 2015



## The win-win model: students powering campus IT

Based in the small city of Rolla, Missouri, a community with a population of about 20,000 people, Missouri S&T has become a beacon for how institutions can leverage their most abundant resource: intelligent, motivated students. By employing over 1,500 of their 7,000 students across campus – including around 50 within IT – Missouri S&T has created a pipeline of talent that is both cost-effective and deeply invested in the university's mission.

This approach is a win-win:

- For students: It offers meaningful, paid work that directly supports their studies, allowing them to gain hands-on experience in highly specialized fields. Students are not just performing routine tasks; they are packaging applications, maintaining software delivery systems, and supporting the digital backbone of the university.
- For the institution: It provides access to a motivated workforce at a fraction of the cost of traditional hires, enabling the university to do more with less, especially in critical areas like IT and engineering where specialized skills command a premium in the open market.



## Rapid onboarding: from classroom to production in two weeks

A standout feature of Missouri S&T's model is the speed at which students become productive. Thanks to the AppsAnywhere Academy, student employees can go from onboarding to independently packaging and maintaining software delivery systems in as little as two weeks. The Academy provides a structured training path that is completely free of charge for AppsAnywhere customers:

- Completion of both the AppsAnywhere Associate and Advanced Packager courses
- Supplementary documentation on standard practices and internal systems
- Live demonstrations and mentoring from experienced staff

This ensures that by the time students are assigned their first production-ready task, they have both the theoretical grounding and practical skills needed to contribute meaningfully.

**“The AppsAnywhere Academy has been a very great resource for building skills and knowledge. Once the students have gone through that, we have a person who didn’t do the packaging be the person who does the testing. So, we get some cross-knowledge sharing there because the tester might notice something the packager didn’t, or vice versa.”**  
commented Austin.





## How it works: the Missouri S&T approach

The student packaging team at Missouri S&T consists of six student employees and a co-op (typically engaged for seven months at 40 hours per week). Their responsibilities include:

- Handling requests for Cloudpaging, Jamf, and SCCM packages
- Completing over 100 package requests annually
- Testing packages across four primary environments (standard office, computer labs, hardware, and BYOD)
- Utilizing Jira to track package requests and software updates, with automations ensuring timely updates and compliance

Each package undergoes rigorous multi-environment testing before deployment, ensuring reliability for all users: students, staff, and faculty.

## AppsAnywhere: the enabler of seamless digital experience

AppsAnywhere, the platform at the heart of Missouri S&T's digital strategy plays an important role in making all this possible. AppsAnywhere provides:

- A unified, app-store-like interface for delivering software to any device, anywhere on campus or beyond.
- Smart delivery methods that ensure optimal performance, whether on university-managed machines or personal devices.
- Streamlined backend management, allowing IT teams (and student workers) to efficiently package, test, and deploy applications without the complexity and cost of traditional VDI or manual installations.

For users, the experience is seamless: all necessary software is accessible through a single portal, regardless of device or location. For IT, the platform reduces technical barriers and administrative overhead, freeing up time and resources for innovation.

## A blueprint for institutions everywhere

What Missouri S&T has achieved is not unique to its geography or size. Michigan Technological University, another institution in a remote location, has similarly transformed its IT operations by empowering student workers and adopting AppsAnywhere. The result: faster application deployment, reduced reliance on expensive infrastructure, and a more engaged, skilled student workforce.

This model is scalable and adaptable. Any institution, regardless of location, can benefit from:

- Employing students to fill critical IT roles
- Leveraging platforms like AppsAnywhere to simplify software delivery
- Investing in structured training to ensure rapid, effective onboarding





## The broader impact: meeting the sector's challenges

The higher education sector faces unprecedented demands for digital transformation. Yet, as highlighted in recent research, the skills gap continues to widen, as financial pressures mount. By adopting innovative, student-powered employment models and embracing technologies designed for education, institutions can not only overcome these challenges, but gain much more in prestige, student engagement and providing students with the opportunity to develop and learn new skills.

At AppsAnywhere, we are proud to be part of this innovative community, witnessing daily the ingenuity and resilience of institutions like Missouri S&T. Their story is proof that with the right tools and mindset, higher education can turn its greatest challenges into opportunities for growth, innovation, and shared success.

Find out more at:  
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AppsAnywhere is a global software delivery provider that revolutionised how students and higher education faculty and staff access applications on campus computers or on personal devices. Since 2009, AppsAnywhere has been at the forefront of app management innovation, providing equitable, consistent and seamless digital experiences for more than 3 million students, in 300 institutions, across 22 countries.

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