



# CASE STUDY

## UNIVERSITIES: A GRADUATE CLASS IN PEST CONTROL

Delivering effective pest control services on a college or university campus involves effective communication, transparency, creativity and trust. It also requires pest control professionals to know and follow school specific guidelines on the type of services, products and application techniques that can be used.

Professional pest control services are important for college and university campuses to protect the health and safety of students, staff and visitors, prevent structural damage to buildings, reduce the risk of food borne illnesses due to pest contamination, and promote an environment conducive to learning, not pests.

Sprague Pest Solutions has extensive experience designing and delivering pest control programs for universities. Their work demonstrates a graduate level knowledge of how to reduce pest pressure on some of the most recognizable campuses in the country.

### CHALLENGES

Implementing a comprehensive pest control program is essential for maintaining a safe, healthy, and encouraging environment for learning and living on college campuses. It also comes with challenges.

- **Campus Size:** Campuses can cover hundreds of acres and include facilities such as classroom buildings, recreation, food service, performing arts, residence halls, maintenance facilities, and dining complexes which serve thousands of students, faculty, and staff.
- **Abundant Pest Conducive Conditions:** The size and scope of a college campuses also means there are abundant environments that are conducive to attracting or harboring pests. From large commercial kitchens and restaurant outlets to shipping and receiving docks to dorm rooms; college campuses have many places where pests can thrive.
- **Transient Environment :** Colleges are always seeing new faces coming and going, as well as deliveries of food and other supplies. This increases the risk of pests being introduced into dorm rooms, classrooms, food service, storage areas, and arenas.
- **High Expectations:** The dynamics of working with world-class educational institutions includes high expectations of their vendor partners. Maintaining pest-free environments where thousands of people live, work and eat is a mandate.
- **Public Perception:** A well-maintained and pest-free campus reflects positively on the university, contributing to its image with prospective students, faculty, donors, and staff. A widespread pest infestation is not a selling point for the admissions office.
- **Strict Guidelines:** Many universities have their own protocols for how pest management services can be delivered, what products can and can't be used, and where they can be used. It is important for pest control service providers to understand and stick to the guidelines provided by the college or university.

Danny Liming, route manager for Sprague Pest Solutions, said in addition to the diverse conditions and wide array of pests, managing pests on a college campus involves identifying pest 'hot button' issues with the different constituencies on campus.

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**Danny Liming**

Route Manager  
Sprague Pest Solutions

For example, Liming worked with curators of an on-campus library that housed rare documents, papers, and artifacts, to design a program that focused on preventing issues with silverfish. This is because silverfish consume paper and the glue found in book bindings and this poses a threat to high value items such as rare books, manuscripts, and artwork.

“Servicing a college or university campus requires us to be familiar with and adaptive to the different, and sometimes unique pest needs of the various groups on campus,” said Liming. Liming also dealt with severe rodent issues on campus. In addition to the increased difficulty of removing the infestation once it’s established a presence inside an administration or classroom building, the health threat rodents present is a major concern.

“People got very concerned when we dropped a ceiling tile to investigate and rat feces fall down from above,” said Liming. “Not only was that unsettling but it created another level of remediation in regard to cleaning and decontamination.”

Sprague route managers Jeff Olson, Michael Torrez and Adam Jolicoeur work in concert to provide pest control services to several colleges and universities. They know well the challenges that come with preventing and eliminating pest threats.

“A service visit can include inspections or treatments to offices, commercial kitchens, restaurants, residential units and even arenas all in one day,” said Olson. “Each of these locations presents a different challenge and solution to manage the issue.”

In addition to the regular on-going services and pest monitoring, they coordinate with their contact on any new pest issues that need to be investigated.

“We can deal with anything from ants in a research lab, mice in the student union restaurants to mosquitoes in an auditorium,” said Torrez. “College campuses by the nature of their operation will create conducive conditions that attract pests.”

The challenge of navigating different university protocols is something route manager Keith Kacaneck deals with while regularly servicing the campuses of two major universities.

Kacaneck uses pest trend data and history to get ahead of issues and make recommendations to his contacts for additional services or follow up items that university maintenance, food service, groundskeeping or resident life teams need to act on.

“We work within the protocols and guidelines our clients have and then go above and beyond in delivering the services that are required to keep their campuses pest-free,” said Kacaneck. “Our approach for colleges is to allow students, faculty and staff to focus on education, not pests.”

## SOLUTIONS

The first step Sprague Pest Solutions takes when onboarding a university client is to unify and streamline the programs and emphasize a preventive rather than reactive approach. In the case of the severe rodent infestation, Liming needed to quickly knockdown the pe

rsistent rodent pressure that was threatening several administration and classroom buildings. A comprehensive inspection, baiting and trapping (400 rodent devices are installed across the campus), and exclusion program was started, and the results were immediate.

“We knew we would have to stack the effects and deploy a multi-pronged treatment plan to get control of the rodent populations,” said Liming. “The university was very open to re-imagining their IPM programs to focus on preventive actions including exclusion and sanitation.”



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### Jeff Olson

Route Manager  
Sprague Pest Solutions



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### Keith Kacaneck

Route Manager  
Sprague Pest Solutions

Both Norway and roof rats were present on campus and Liming worked with the university to overcome their concern about placing bait rings in drop ceilings, rafters, and other inaccessible high-level areas to tackle the aggressive roof rat population.

Olson recalled when the presence of flies near a concession stand in an on-campus arena caused quite a stir.

“There were thousands of flies near one of the concession stands and our contact called us immediately to investigate,” said Olson. “Flies near any food service outlet are a cause for concern due to the potential they have of spreading bacteria that can cause food-borne illnesses.”

After inspecting the area and making a positive identification Olson discovered that it was caddis flies coming from a decorative planter near the concession stand, not the stand itself. After knocking down the flies, the plant was removed, and the situation resolved.

At another institution, Torrez battles a mosquito problem in the auditorium that was perplexing since there were no conducive conditions - standing water or excess moisture - inside the facility or a clear access point - open windows, missing screens - for them to get inside. Sprague deployed mosquito traps on the outside to knockdown the population but dug deeper to find the access point.

During a follow-up inspection Torrez identified the access point, a poor fitting door that left a small gap for the mosquitoes to get inside. Working with the university maintenance staff, the door was fixed, and the mosquitoes were denied entry.

## RESULTS

“There are a lot of moving parts when designing and delivering pest control programs on a college campus,” said Olson. “Knowing what protocols, you need to follow and maintaining open lines of communication with the client, are key to getting the job done.”

With a collaborative approach in place with clients, programs designed around IPM strategies combined with a high level of customer service, Sprague has delivered sustainable results for its college and university clients.

“No year is the same when it comes to preventing and managing pests on a college campus,” said Liming. “That’s what makes it not only a challenge but highly satisfying at the same time.”



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**Danny Liming**

Route Manager  
Sprague Pest Solutions