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Orrick: Abilene Christian University Enters EaaS Partnership

Abilene Christian University has entered into a long-term energy-as-a-service (EaaS) partnership with Bernhard, a leader in energy infrastructure, to enhance the university's energy efficiency and sustainability.

Orrick advised ACU as bond and special tax counsel.

THE PARTIES

Abilene Christian University serves a diverse student population of about 6,700 with world-class teaching in a Christ-centered community.

Founded in 1906, this national research university offers online and residential undergraduate and graduate programs. Students choose from 87 baccalaureate majors that include more than 171 areas of study, as well as 71 areas of study in master's degree and specialist programs and four doctoral programs.

ACU's mission is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

Bernhard is an energy infrastructure firm headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. Founded in 1919, Bernhard's core services span the U.S. and include engineering, fabrication, construction, asset management and energy-as-a-service for customers in health care, higher education, hospitality, industrial and other market segments. Bernhard has 24 U.S. offices and more than 2,200 full-time employees.

THE IMPACT

The partnership allows ACU to better focus on its core mission of student success and academic excellence, the university [said](#).

Over the past several years, ACU has made significant investments in its central plant, with \$15 million recently allocated for upgrades. The partnership will free up significant capital resources to accelerate change and tap into Bernhard's expertise in optimizing energy systems. This agreement ensures the university can complete necessary projects faster and more efficiently, enhancing student comfort and reallocating resources toward academic initiatives.

"Our partnership with Bernhard represents a significant step forward in our commitment to sustainability and operational excellence," said Dr. Phil Schubert, ACU president.

A key component of the project is the installation of an 18 MWac solar array, designed to offset existing utility costs and provide long-term cost certainty.

Also, critical upgrades to the campus's central cooling and heating systems will improve resilience to support ACU's growth. The project also includes operational improvements, such as upgrades to HVAC, building automation and lighting systems, which will enhance energy efficiency and

significantly reduce operational costs.

THE TEAM

Charles Cardall led the Orrick team that advised Abilene. The team also included Jerry Kyle. Larry Sobel, Amanda Stephens, Cathleen Chang and Jessica Doherty.

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