Standing out to future students
Jeff Koziol, national account manager

Among the many perks of a campus are the conveniences or amenities it offers its students. They might seem small, but campus ID cards present many benefits. For many, it’s their lifeblood. It’s how they get into their residence hall. It’s how they eat in the dining hall. It’s how they pay for their laundry, print assignments and attend the Friday night football game. One card controls a big portion of a student’s world on campus. So it’s important to ask: Can your campus card do more to enhance the student experience?

One-card providers integrate various systems into a single platform for ease-of-use—both for the campus and its students. Many campuses desire these solutions because everything is integrated and can pull from the same database. And when access control is integrated, monitoring campus becomes even simpler. Students like the convenience and security features they offer, with the latter being a big draw to the parents as well. College recruitment is competitive, and schools that stand out from the crowd by offering additional value will thrive. Therefore, it’s beneficial to communicate the conveniences and security features available to prospective students.

“Full integration allows schools to offer additional value, attracting students and parents to the campus. Schools have a better understanding of what’s going on around campus and can respond in real time. And there are so many capabilities that can integrate into the system for enhanced security and convenience.”
—Robert Gaulden, Allegion’s project based business leader, electronic access control

Exploring the benefits
Universities welcome increasingly tech-savvy scholars each year. This fall will be no different as more Generation Z students arrive on campus, individuals who have grown up with iPods and electronic devices. In response, many schools have adopted new technologies to keep up with student expectations.

There’s a shift occurring where people are becoming less dependent on cards and more dependent on the mobile phone, and it’s no surprise that students are embracing this change. In response, many one-card providers allow them the ability to use their phones to do many of the same things they did with an ID card and more. Through the available mobile apps, students have new capabilities, such as placing orders at the campus coffee shop for pick-up between that tight 5 minute window between classes. Other mobile apps allow the campus ID card to be used for other functions like access control.

It’s common for campuses to have electronic access control at secure buildings, like classrooms, libraries and fitness centers. Many are expanding this technology to residence halls using wireless locks. Adding electronic access control to traditionally mechanical openings reduces security risks associated with key turnover and gives schools advanced monitoring capabilities. Some one-card partners have allowed students to manage access rights, as well, through a mobile app. They can access their room doors without the need of their ID card. And should they notice their physical ID card is missing, they can temporarily suspend use of the card through the same mobile app.

The more connected devices, the more control the school has over every opening. Schools looking for a fully integrated security solution will also connect the software to video surveillance and notification systems—all able to be controlled remotely at any time by authorized university personnel. Students and their parents receive peace of mind knowing that the...
university has invested in an advanced platform that controls access rights to prevent unwarranted entry to residence halls.

Another attractive feature of the one-card system for parents is the ability to manage closed loop accounts. They can add money to the account to be used for on-campus purchases like printing charges, school supplies or meals. Using this account gives parents more control over where the funds are spent compared to an open credit or debit account.

Students, of course, want to feel safe on campus, but a big draw of the one-card system to students is the convenience. Everything is easily accessible, and the more modules that are integrated into the school’s offering, the more the student can control from their ID card or mobile app.

Integrations make it possible to achieve a cashless campus. Meal plans are tracked, but students with funds in their account can also enjoy campus restaurants that accept the campus card. Many schools have stores where students can purchase groceries, or they can load up on supplies at the bookstore—even ordering online in many cases. All of this can be achieved with their campus credential.

On the weekend, students with football tickets are granted access, so all they need to do is present their ID card or mobile device at the game. Similarly, the school can use the system to rent equipment to students or allow them to reserve study spaces. The Juilliard School in New York worked with CBORD to develop a unique solution for their practice rooms. Students can now walk up to a kiosk, scan their ID badge and reserve a room for as long as they would like. This solution made practicing much more convenient for students.

The use of the campus ID card has even been used for public transportation at urban campuses in the larger cities. Some campuses in the Boston area are using their ID cards to provide students accessibility to Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s (MBTA) buses and rail system. Some have moved in that direction, designing their card with the capacity to add transportation as an application.

“One credential, or one device, allows students to do everything they want when integrated optimally,” says Robert Gaulden, project based business leader, electronic access control. “Everything from reserving study rooms to accessing their student rooms to purchasing groceries can be done with the campus ID card. There is technology now that provides students a safe walk home now. Potentially everything they interact with that can be automated or electrified can be integrated for enhanced security and convenience.”

Expanding the campus card capabilities

Most campuses have a one-card system in place, so how do they stand out? Can they do more? It starts by understanding the services that students want on campus, knowing their expectations and delivering conveniences that meet their demands. As Gaulden stated, if students are using technology, it likely has the potential to be connected. Similarly, if there is a pain point for the student body, technology can probably solve it. For example, Juilliard noticed students were roaming the halls looking for empty spaces to practice. They wanted to improve practice room utilization among students, so they worked with CBORD to create the room reservation module.

To get started, work with security integrator and leading one-card software provider, like one of Allegion’s Software Alliance Members. Their experts in the industry that can help campuses discover new possibilities.

When upgrading or expanding technologies, it’s important to seek open, non-proprietary solutions. University-owned encryption keys are a great approach. They keep the control with the university and provide an open card technology for use with other future applications. With
proprietary options, technology is limited. For instance, a proprietary, one-source ID card will only work with specific readers and electronic locks. But open technology is flexible to give users more options, today and down the road when it’s time to upgrade technology.

This is essential on campuses as universities must stay current to continuously attract new students. Schools need to offer amenities that enhance security and convenience, and that is going to be easier with scalable solutions.

As technology advances to offer new and improved capabilities, campuses can get overwhelmed. The systems can be complex, and it’s important that the solution is tailored to fit each school’s needs. It’s recommended to work with a security integrator, one-card provider and your Allegion™ consultant. They can help navigate the choices available and develop a strategy that’s realistic and scalable.

It’s beneficial to speak with experts to discover new opportunities to expand, improve or even simply maintain security and convenience across campus. They understand the unique challenges campuses face, including the need to better promote themselves to future students and parents. Blending security and convenience isn’t an easy feat, but they can assist in striking the right balance.

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