

Blackboard & Saint Louis University



Event Ticketing and Concessions Program

Institutions using the Blackboard Transact platform are discovering unique ways to use their campus ID card not only to streamline operations but to also improve the student experience. Saint Louis University (SLU), a longtime Blackboard client with an enrollment of more than 12,700 students, found an innovative way to use its Billiken student ID card.

With plans to complete its new 10,600-person Chaifetz Arena in March 2008, Saint Louis University used Blackboard technology and its campus ID card to implement a cashless online ticketing and concessions purchasing program for students attending home basketball games. The University worked with the Blackboard Transact team to help them successfully test and deploy the new card program's online and onsite point of sale capabilities in time for their April 2008 kickoff event.

New Arena Sparks Innovation

Prior to 2008, the University did not have an on-campus arena and was shuttling students to the Scottrade Center in downtown St. Louis for its home basketball games. The situation was problematic for both the students and the University. For the students, going off-campus made it more difficult to attend games and also required them to bring cash for concession stand purchases.

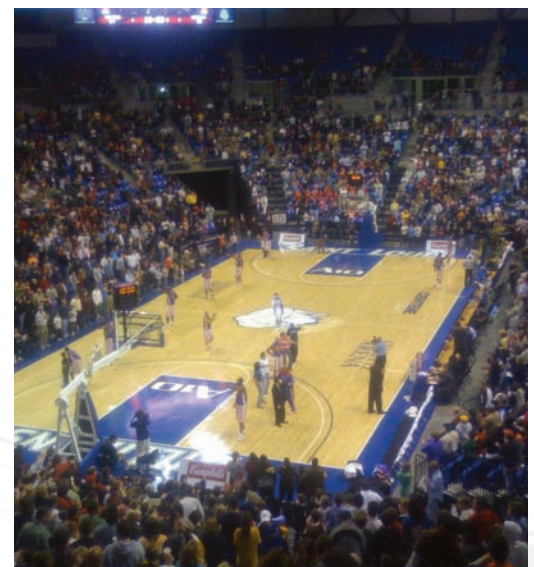
Concurrently, the University realized that taking students off-campus for their home games was very

expensive. In addition to the actual overhead costs of printing the tickets and transporting the students to the games, the University was not receiving any of the student funds spent on concession sales at the Scottrade Center. Wanting to lower costs and bring this lost revenue back to campus, the University decided to build its own arena. A key component of their arena plan was to utilize the Billiken ID card and Blackboard campus commerce capabilities to help manage a cashless online ticketing and concessions purchasing program for students at the new facility.

Managing the program through the Blackboard Transact™ platform, Saint Louis University's administration and card services department worked together to set several goals that they hoped to accomplish with the online program including streamlining the ticketing process, tracking student attendance at the games, providing students with easier access into the area and enabling cashless purchases at the concessions stand.



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“We are always looking for ways to improve the student experience on campus. Using Blackboard technology to manage our ticketing and concession purchases has been a win-win situation for all of us. It’s been very successful and we’re excited to continue creating and innovating more card program applications within our Blackboard system.”

Chandra Gines,
Card Supervisor,
Saint Louis University

“Building the Chaifetz Arena was very important to us because it brought our students back to campus,” said Chandra Gines, Card Supervisor at Saint Louis University. “Using our Blackboard system and the Billiken ID card allowed us to have more control over everything at the games, including the student experience.”

Launching The Ticketing and Concessions Purchasing Program:

The Blackboard Transact platform proved to be the ideal solution to manage the ticketing and concession purchasing program because of its online and on-campus payment capabilities, as well as the students’ familiarity with the system. Saint Louis University used Blackboard technology in several ways to ensure that the ticketing and concession purchasing program worked effectively. Students were able to purchase basketball tickets for home games online using their Billiken ID card. On game day, the University had a designated student entrance where the students presented their cards and were swiped into the games. Students were also able to use their ID cards at the game to make concession stand purchases. Feedback on this program has been uniformly positive from the students and the arena employees.

“We wanted this program to be convenient for the students so they would have to carry around less cash and encounter fewer hassles,” said Gines. “The students are able to go online and purchase their tickets. When they arrive at the arena, they have a quick ‘one-swipe’ process into the arena, which helps traffic move very quickly. Then during the games, they only need their ID card to purchase concessions; no cash required. They absolutely love this program because it is so easy for them.”

University Benefits

The University has also experienced several benefits from the new ticketing and concessions program. Using the Billiken ID card as the primary source for all arena transactions, SLU has become a more “green” paperless environment which has helped the University streamline its operations, reduce its overhead printing costs and directly collect the funds from the concession stands. The University promotes using the ID card as much as possible because it provides “one-card” convenience for the students, less cash handling and processing and more direct money going back to the university.

“Blackboard technology gives us the opportunity to do many things,” said Gines. “Our arena staff has commented that using the Blackboard solution has made their jobs so much easier. They can do more tasks in less time, which has made the entire process more efficient. We have also seen an increase in the number of students using their ID card to make purchases from the concession stands during the games. That’s a great benefit for us.”

Since implementing the Billiken card ID program, revenue at the concession stands increased throughout the basketball season.

Partnering with Blackboard

Blackboard and Saint Louis University worked together during the construction of the arena through the first home basketball game in November 2008.

“Throughout the entire process, planning, implementation and launch, Blackboard was there every step of the way,” said Gines. “They also attended the first event at the Chaifetz Arena to make sure everything ran smoothly, and it did. Blackboard also returned in November 2008 for the first home basketball game to ensure that the system was still operating perfectly. Blackboard has been a great partner for us.”

