

Blackboard & the University of Alabama



My Football Ticket Program

Football games at the University of Alabama are the hottest ticket on campus. With 27,000 students vying for 15,000 reserved seats in the student section at Bryant Denny Stadium, scoring tickets to any home game is competitive. Because of the high demand and limited student seating, the University of Alabama wants to ensure that as many students as possible have the opportunity to attend games, while at the same time, creating an efficient stadium entrance process reducing lines and wait time on game day.

In order to accomplish these goals, the University realized it would need an electronic paperless ticketing application that could better manage the distribution of student tickets. The system would need to be reliable, stable and capable of handling a large volume of student users at one time. With these criteria in mind, the University of Alabama turned to Blackboard to help build and successfully launch the My Football Ticket online student ticket program.

Paper Ticket Challenges:

Prior to the 2008 football season, the University of Alabama's Athletic Department distributed paper tickets to students for all of its home games. However, using paper tickets had its share of challenges. In addition to the logistical challenges that Athletics encountered printing and distributing 15,000 season ticket packages, the University also found that expediting

student traffic into the stadium was challenging since students had to present a paper ticket as well as swipe their student ID, the Action Card. In addition, some students would also regularly re-sell their game tickets on the open market to non-students.

"We wanted to provide the chance for every student to experience an Alabama football gameday at the stadium," said Jeanine Brooks, Director of the Action Card office at the University of Alabama. "We realized we needed to provide a student-friendly system that encouraged usage and filled the student section for each game."

The Student Government Association (SGA) and the Student Athletic Committee realized they needed to move the ticketing process online, which allowed the students convenient, self-service access to manage their electronic ticket.



Blackboard

“Blackboard has been instrumental in the My Football Ticket program. They provided a stable and secure environment to manage the daily transactions and reporting and have given us the ability to expand the program to fit the needs of the students as well as the University. We’ve been very impressed with their service and the system’s capabilities.”

Jeanine Brooks,
*Director of Action Card,
University of Alabama*



Working with Blackboard

Before the launch of My Football Ticket, the University of Alabama wanted to find a program that could be easily adopted by the students. The University knew the Blackboard system was stable, reliable and already familiar to the students. They worked with Blackboard to customize the My Football Ticket application using Blackboard’s existing Commerce Management capabilities, which are widely used across campus.

“Blackboard was essential in helping us launch the My Football Ticket program. They helped us customize the system so that it could easily handle large volumes of transactions online,” said Brooks. “The students’ familiarity with Blackboard and the Action Card was also beneficial for our training purposes. They knew the system and how it worked, which made the program’s adoption across campus much easier.”

Blackboard worked directly with Alabama’s Information Technology and Action Card departments to customize the online My Football Ticket program. Eligible students purchase their tickets, then, using the Blackboard system, can check their electronic ticket balance online. Students can transfer their electronic ticket to another eligible student, or donate their electronic ticket to a general ticket bank, which is used to issue tickets to a waiting list of students.

Incorporating Blackboard allowed Alabama to streamline the entire student ticketing process. To further promote the My Football Ticket program on campus, the University produced and uploaded multiple training videos on the Blackboard system to demonstrate how the program works, which has helped increase student adoption during the season.

Positive Results

Replacing paper tickets with the Action Card system has been highly beneficial. Since its official launch on August 31, 2008, the My Football Ticket program recorded positive results for all seven home games with more than 130,000 visits to the My Football Ticket site, nearly 15,000 online ticket transfers, and more than 3,500 tickets that were donated electronically to another student.

The My Football Ticket program eliminated the need for ticket pick-up as well as created efficient entrance to the venue, reducing lines and wait times to enter the stadium on game day. The program has helped increase the number of Alabama students that attend games and has reduced the number of non-students in the student section.

Student Satisfaction and Awards

The Alabama students love the system for its ease-of-use and convenience. The SGA has also noted that there has been a tremendous increase in the number of Alabama students attending the home games.

The Action Card office is proud of the success of the My Football Ticket program. The University won the 2008 NACAS Award for Collaboration and Partnership and they plan to grow the program even further in the future.