

Blackboard & Mercer University



A single, integrated door access system provides institutions with improved security capabilities, better campus control, and a more efficient administrative staff. These were some of the main factors that Mercer University, an institution with more than 7,300 graduate and undergraduate students, considered as it developed its campus expansion plans.

Since the early 1990s Mercer had used several different door access systems across its Macon, Georgia campus, which made unifying campus operations and security difficult. As the University planned for future growth, it decided to deploy an integrated door access solution that could be used on all of its campuses. It turned to Blackboard to help launch its new door access system.

Multiple Door Access Systems

Mercer had been using a variety of door access systems across its campus for many years, the result of several departments making buying decisions about which systems to use. By 1998, Mercer was using four different door access systems, none of which integrated with other systems effectively.

The University needed one integrated door access system that could leverage the capabilities of its campus card and could streamline their operations across all their campuses.

"We had too many systems to manage, and because they did not integrate

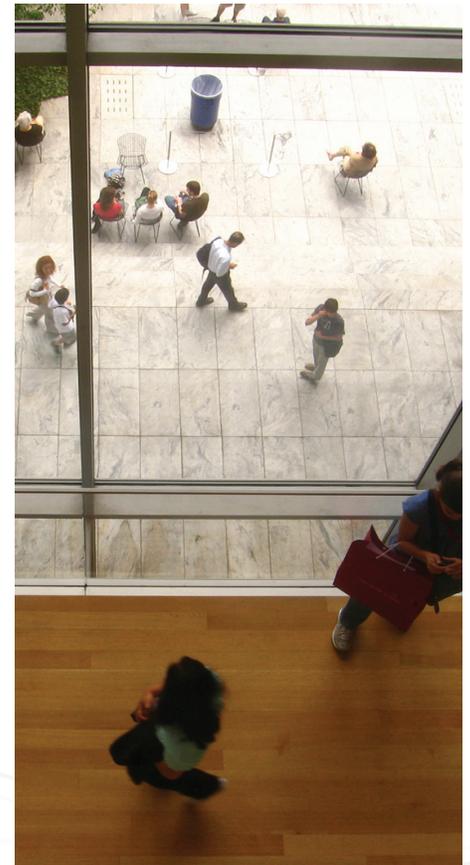
together, that made our jobs harder," said Ken Boyer, Director of Auxiliary Services at Mercer University. "It was important for us to find the right system to manage all of our door access needs. We felt Blackboard's solution gave us the best offering to combine our card system capabilities with our door access readers."

In 1999, Mercer's Auxiliary Services department began working with Blackboard on its door access needs.

Using Blackboard Door Access

Through its partnership with Ingersoll Rand, Blackboard delivered a versatile, cost-effective and user-friendly solution that integrated completely with the University's Blackboard one-card system.

"Having a door access system that directly interfaces with our current card program makes managing the system easier for our staff and gives us more freedom to patrol the campuses and do other vital security functions and maintenance around campus," says Boyer.



Blackboard

“Using Blackboard allowed us to integrate our campus card system with our security management initiatives. We have multiple campuses and all of them can be operated through our one-card program. Using Blackboard’s Door Access system gives our students flexibility, saves our campus money and makes our campus security more productive.”

Ken Boyer,
*Director Auxiliary Services,
Mercer University*

Blackboard’s door access system made life easier for the University’s Auxiliary Staff by allowing it to control and monitor one database versus several systems.

Mercer made the decision to deploy Ingersoll Rand door access readers which integrates very easily with the Blackboard system, and installed its first Blackboard door access readers in the law school building with great success.

Enhancing Campus Security Capabilities:

Mercer’s security personnel are some of the biggest endorsers of the Blackboard door access solution because it has made their jobs more efficient. Once the Blackboard system was implemented, Mercer began to see consistent improvements made in managing foot traffic in campus buildings. The door access system provides Mercer University with an automatic door locking system on a schedule for timed locking and unlocking, which has helped security staff save time locking and unlocking doors at all campus buildings.

In addition, Mercer has started to experiment with integrating door access with other security tools. The University started connecting its door access readers to its video surveillance cameras to provide additional building security.

“Now, when students swipe into a building, a photo of the cardholder will appear on our screen. That’s an additional security feature we can use,” says Boyer. “The flexibility and scalability of the system to meet all of our campus security needs is another important aspect of Blackboard.”

Because of the diverse functions of the Blackboard access control capability, the Mercer staff can redirect the responsibilities of campus officers so they can use their time managing more aspects of the campus life.

Future Door Access Expansion:

Since moving to Blackboard, Mercer University has started wiring numerous other buildings on campus, and plans to continue expanding all of its campus and regional centers using Blackboard’s door access solution.

“We know that Blackboard’s door access solution can help us with our campus and center expansions. Having one system operate multiple campuses makes my job and my staff’s job much easier,” says Boyer. “The Blackboard system has also been convenient for the students because they do not have to carry any additional keys or learn new codes. It’s been a very positive addition for the entire campus.”