



Adds Contactless Card System

Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) in Joplin recently made the switch to a modernized card system that allows it to do a lot with one little card.

“Prior to this, we produced our own IDs on campus, but we weren’t really using a modern one-card system at all,” said Chris Owens, manager of the Campus Card Service Center. “That card system was not integrated with food service and purchasing on campus. We really didn’t do much other than print an ID with a number and a bar code. Our meal plans were managed through a separate system operated by our foodservice company.”

Because it did not have a large inventory of existing hardware to replace, MSSU was free to select the card system technology that best suited its current and future needs. The university chose to eliminate the magnetic stripe functionality from many areas of operation, opting instead for contactless iCLASS cards and readers with the CS Gold campus card system from CBORD.

A main reason for going contactless was security. “It is more convenient, but the security aspect of the iCLASS versus the mag stripe was what pushed us to go that way,” he said. “We have stored value credits, kind of like a debit account. We didn’t have that prior to the implementation of the system and one of the top concerns was security. If someone lost their card, could that account be deactivated or could that card be duplicated? That magstripe on a card can be copied very quickly and very easily where the iCLASS can’t.”

A major reason why the school choose to upgrade was to manage printing on campus. “Before having a one-card system on campus, we basically had free unlimited printing,” said Owens. “That

was an expense that we were just not able to support anymore. We knew we were going to have to put some kind of print management system in place. If that could be incorporated into one card, it just helped make that decision even easier.”

Students now load money onto the card called Lion Bucks, which can be used for printing, as well as vending machines, the bookstore, concessions at sporting events, the on-campus print shop and other campus venues.

It is no surprise that students viewed the end of free printing as a negative. “We came up with a fairly clever idea before we eliminated it and that was the last full semester of free printing,” he said. “The largest volume of printing at our campus is at our library, and I talked to the director and asked if they would collect all of the pages that were printed at the library that were not retrieved from the printers. They have always collected and recycled that paper, but I asked if they would be willing to count the amount of paper they have received.”

He continued, “The amount of paper they collected was overwhelming. We had over 69,000 sheets of paper that were never picked up from the printer. We stacked all of that paper here in our card office and we had those folks come in to put their money on the card and they were not happy about it but I had a visual — a stack of paper that was bigger than we were. A lot of people who weren’t happy when they came in left a little more satisfied. Now the resources we have are being better used and the wait times for printing has shrunk considerably.”

Students were required to

open their Lion Bucks account with a minimum balance, which actually helped the program grow. “All of a sudden you go from having free printing to having to have Lion Bucks on your card to be able to print on campus, which drove a lot of people to open up accounts,” said Owens. “The minimum opening balance gave those users an opportunity to look for other ways to spend that money. We had a lot of people who might not have been too happy with the minimum balance and when they come back to add more money, you remember. ‘You weren’t happy about putting all your money on your card a week or two ago.’”

The system also monitors the students’ meal plans and dining dollars — which is separate from Lion Bucks — leading to a change in one famous campus term, according to Owens. “Instead of calling them meal swipes, they are now meal taps.”

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