Enabling Modern, Efficient and Secure Universities with HID SAFE

Advanced access management capabilities streamline thousands of identities across multiple locations.

As universities and higher education institutions continue to expand to meet the growing student population, institutions are met with the task of onboarding, managing and offboarding thousands of unique identities each year. Manual processes and disconnected systems across numerous departments and campuses are no longer viable in these organizations where administrative efficiency, cost efficiency and security must not compromise the user experience.

CHALLENGES

Our client is a university that matriculates over 11,000 students, employs over 1,000 faculty & staff and is in the process of expanding across three campuses. With an expected increase of identities year after year, the university was faced with the challenge of managing a broad array of risk access requirements and risk profiles. Each identity requires unique access to locations and resources – from dormitories to classrooms, research labs to cafeterias and libraries to secure data rooms. The result of this challenge prior to HID SAFE™ deployment, was an institution with multiple, disparate security and authoritative systems across various locations. Before SAFE, the university separately managed multiple physical access control systems (PACS), a human resource management system (HRMS) for faculty, administration and staff, admissions and records systems for students, a parking system and various residency management systems (RMS).

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Credentials that were being used by students, staff and contractors were convoluted and became impossible to painlessly trace and manage. Visibility into who, where and why individuals were gaining access in the university was not able to be monitored by security departments. These issues, combined with independent and manually driven processes, left gaps in the university's security strategy – gaps that were open to safety compromises, insider threats and invisible errors.

A large challenge for the university was the impossible task of efficiently onboarding thousands of new students per year, not to mention hundreds of adjustments to individual data and their credentials throughout their lifecycle at the university. During student orientation, when thousands of students were arriving on campus to enroll and collect their badges, the preparation process had to be started months in advance and responsibilities spanned across multiple departments with limited communication. The onboarding process became an overwhelming and highly manual effort for administrators who were tasked with coordinating between admissions, security, other systems and the students themselves. The university's previous onboarding process resulted in large numbers of students waiting for long periods of time to receive their credentials on their orientation day and became a source of unnecessary stress and frustration for everyone involved.

KEY CHALLENGES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED BY THE UNIVERSITY INCLUDED THE NEED TO:

- Unify management of identity data and access rights that were being kept in multiple disparate systems by different departments and teams
- Streamline identities and issue credentials to support a diverse cross section of access rights and authority levels across the entire identity lifecycle – from student personal access to dormitories and highly secure data rooms or research labs, to individuals who needed access to both student libraries and the on-campus café for their part-time work
- Eliminate chaotic, inefficient and labor-intensive student enrollment periods and orientation days for mass onboarding of students
- Eliminate human error that was causing unauthorized and unmonitored access, leading to security risks and inconvenience

SOLUTION

The university implemented HID SAFE to automate and streamline the onboarding and management process of all identities, bringing together multiple locations and departments to achieve better visibility of each one.

Key elements of HID SAFE utilized by the university included:

1. Automated Badging and Multi-Purpose Credentials

With SAFE, the university was able to completely transform their entire badging and credentialling process. Now, the onboarding process involves incoming students accessing a secure self-service portal with their own username and password. Here, they upload their photo for their badge and it automatically triggers additional workflows such as photo approval and background or finance checks. Integration with HID Fargo® Connect™ provides a quick and easy printing solution that can be carried out in bulk, before credentials are seamlessly handed to students upon their arrival. As a solution to convoluted credentials for multiple uses across campus, SAFE allowed the university to use streamlined credentials that individuals can use across all services within the institution – from printing an essay, to accessing their room, to paying for their lunch.

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2. Integration With Authoritative Sources Across Multiple Departments

SAFE allowed the university to break down the silos between their departments that used to work independently and did not previously communicate with one another – from housing, food services and libraries to research labs and highly secure data server rooms. SAFE does this by integrating authoritative systems such as PACS, HRMS, admission systems and third parties into a common platform that pushes and pulls data from existing infrastructure. Now, multiple departments such as IT, security and admin can all easily access the data they need.

In this case, the university had two, separate PACS due to growth over the past 20 years and expansion into new buildings. The university benefitted from SAFE's integration of existing systems and prevented excessive costs that would have been incurred from replacing existing infrastructure. With HID SAFE, the university has the peace of mind that any future buildings or infrastructure can be integrated on a scale-as-you-grow basis.

3. Adaptable Visitor Management

The university understood the importance of creating excellent impressions and recognized that their dated visitor and event management procedures were hindering their potential. By utilizing SAFE's visitor manager capabilities, organizing large scale orientation days, conferences and camps is made easy for them. Today, hundreds of visitors can conveniently book open days online and arrive on site to be quickly checked-in, identified and issued temporary credentials with access restricted to only required buildings and areas. The university enjoys numerous flexible visitor options, such as sending visitors QR codes in advance of their visit with a variety of capabilities: from automatically connecting them to the Wi-Fi when they arrive, to issuance of a free coffee token, to enabling access through a speed lane into the desired building for their visit.

RESULTS

After deployment of HID SAFE, the university realized immediate results in the following areas:

Efficiency. The ways in which SAFE has exceeded the university's diverse identity management expectations are immense. After transferring over 12,000 identities from PACS to SAFE, identities are now onboarded without delay and can be adjusted and removed instantly and simultaneously throughout multiple systems. The identity processing time has dramatically decreased, meaning the annual intake of new students is efficient and smooth – all the way from admission acceptance to badges being ready to collect. The improved system also requires fewer extra staff to be present at onboarding days and events. The streamlining of this process has resulted in the elimination of up to 95 percent of badging and access errors and an increase in the productivity of departments – thanks to less time being spent on repetitive administration tasks. The SAFE solution also now provides an efficient experience for every student that spans from a quick and convenient onboarding process to easy to use, streamlined credentials to access every resource throughout their university experience. Boasting a modern and desirable place to study, the university now enjoys a fully automated access provisioning and terminating process – against customizable rules, policies and workflows for access rights management across every single department.

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Security. For the university, ensuring a secure environment where hundreds of individuals can move safely between facilities yet only have access to the right, secure areas was imperative. With their previous security processes, there were countless opportunities for people to access areas they should not. The university now benefits from total visibility and reassurance that every single person on campus is accounted for, which has contributed to the automation of 90 percent of security operations. Identity vetting and validation is now a quick, easy and automated process that works in conjunction with watch lists to ensure no access is granted that may risk the safety of others. With SAFE implementation, security automation is also reflected to the university's auditing and compliance processes. Real-time location data allows visibility into when and where students have been to support policy compliance. The university now has total visibility of the thousands of people who pass through their campus each day.

The overall benefits for the university since deploying the HID SAFE™ Enterprise solution can be summarized as follows:

1. Reduction in manual onboarding, badging processes and visitor management.

- Students and visitors now receive an effortless and modern first impression
- Wait times are reduced due to the fully automated access provisioning that includes speedy onboarding and termination processes
- Significant reduction in operating costs
- Students are freed from having to carry multiple access cards, replaced instead by a single, multi-purpose card that enhances convenience and minimizes the risk of being lost

2. Centralized administration and operational flexibility.

- Multiple departments and systems are now connected permitting easy viewing and management of identities
- Policy-based physical identity and access management, policy-compliant provisioning and workflow approvals are enabled
- Ownership is now distributed throughout the university to trusted individuals allowing for greater department autonomy and convenience

3. Improved security.

- Comprehensive security protocols have been implemented, allowing for every possible measure to prevent threats to students or property
- Automated rules and workflows for access rights management have been enabled so that no identity is unseen or vulnerable to threats
- The ability to always establish the "who," "where," "when" and "why" of identity access across every single department and facility is now in place

4. Future proofing security operations.

- Flexibility of the SAFE solution eliminates integration challenges with newer systems and technologies
- The dynamic and agile policy-based system easily manages workflow changes, new rules and policies across diverse sets of identities to ensure continuous compliance with mandates and regulations. To learn more, visit hidglobal.com/safe.