



AN OPEN & SHUT CASE

Improving Campus Security
One Door at a Time

by Hilary Moreno

This weekend, I had an amazing sleepover with my oldest child in her freshman dorm room. She used her "swipe," as she refers to her student ID card, to unlock the main door to the building, then again to gain entry to the elevator, and finally, to open the door to her room. Dorm room rules meant that I, as a visitor, could not be alone in her room at any time. As a mom, I am secretly elated by all of these overlapping security measures.



When I was an undergrad, there were keypads on most buildings, and each had a unique code. If you didn't know the code, you had to ask a security guard to let you in. I had a key to my dorm room, but found that my meal card was sufficient if I slid it between the door and the door frame. This was convenient, but not at all safe.

Campus-wide Access Control and Card Reader Locks

Keys have existed since the 6th century to keep people and possessions safe, but they may have run their course. New technology allows for much greater control, information, and security when it comes to who is coming and going from buildings on your campus. Current access control options allow for key cards, using either RFID (radio frequency identification) or a magnetic stripe, to be individually programmed for faculty and students, thereby allowing or declining access to specific areas. Key cards can be programmed further to limit access to specific hours.

Each time a student or teacher swipes a key card for entry, information such as that of name, date, and time is collected. This infor-

mation then can be used to determine campus building usage—for instance, in keeping a library open 24/7 if late night student traffic warrants expanded hours.

When it comes to either the Summer term or Spring Break, admittance to buildings can be restricted through a time-specific reprogramming of access options for students. This effectively limits the need for additional security or staff during breaks, and further, it reduces overall annual expenses.

Key cards can be used in conjunction with pin code access to add another layer of security. Unfortunately, in both cases, colleges need to remember that key cards and pin codes can be shared and lost as easily as keys.

Cloud-based Entry Options

For even more flexibility and access control, consider a cloud-based option for entry. A key card, of course, can be damaged, lost, or borrowed; instead of relying on one, students, faculty, and staff can be assigned personalized credentials for various locations through the use of their cell phones or smartwatches.

Mobile access also allows for the ability to lock doors remotely so teachers and students can avoid being close to a dangerous situation.

A user database can be easily changed to allow for both an influx of freshmen each year and for the removal of outgoing students, all without the need to collect keys or key cards. Different levels of access can be instantly granted or withdrawn even in the case of campus visitors.

Lockdowns and Other Emergencies

Unlike metal keys that are limited to manual operation, technically advanced entry systems allow entire buildings or sections of campus to be put on lockdown with the touch of a button overriding key cards and pin numbers. With the devastating increase in mass shootings in the recent past, campuses are reconsidering security options that can be accessed and quickly adjusted with cloud-based solutions.

Different types of threats require varying levels of security to have the best chance of keeping students on your campus safe and healthy. In the case of external hazards,

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students and faculty may need to be temporarily sequestered inside. If the danger lies inside a building, limiting exit options may help to contain the threat while also allowing safe passage for escaping students. By implementing wired access control systems, the main rule of lockdown—that is, to lock or secure all doors and windows—can be enforced quickly and in turn allow faculty to focus on student safety until the situation is under control. It is important to build in-manual options, particularly in the event of a power failure, or if a student is out of the classroom when lockdown occurs.

Fire Safety Doors

Fire-rated or fire-resistant doors play a significant role in slowing or stopping the spread of flames and smoke. The majority of these doors are constructed of metal, steel, gypsum, glass, or combinations of these materials. Certified fire-rated doors are supposed to not combust from 20-90 minutes when in direct contact with flame; however, this also depends on how hot the fire is and the material and the



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material from which the door is constructed. Steel doors can hold off some fires for up to three hours. Although not completely fireproof, these allow time for safe evacuation and for firefighters to contain and extinguish the blaze.

In Addition to Technology

Overlapping security measures allow for the most flexible and secure alternatives when it comes to gaining access to buildings or classrooms. If there's a power failure or if a threat, such as an active shooter, happens too quickly to notify campus security, manual emergency door locks afford immediate security.

Small steel door barricade devices can be permanently installed on either the floor, just inside the door, or near the bottom of a metal door frame, depending on whether it swings inward or outward. Lower placement helps prevent an intruder from breaking a door window to gain access to a room. Portable options are also available and can be quickly installed or removed when needed.

The Right Door for the Job

Doors are not limited to the type I drew as a child on my white-picket-fence home. A residence hall may require a different type of door than a classroom, a science lab, an emergency exit, a gym, or a sports arena.

In some cases, a revolving door or a turnstile may be the best option whereas in others the focus is on maximum security, restricted access, or emergency notification. Additionally, doors should be access-friendly in order to allow for easy entry and exit for people with disabilities.

Many companies offer security options that can be retrofitted to existing doors thereby lessening overall cost for upgrades without compromising the safety of students.

Not Under My Protection Anymore

For 18 years my number one job was to love and protect my oldest child. Now that responsibility lies in the hands of the college she attends. If I think too much about all the possible threats that can lurk on campus, it's absolutely overwhelming. Watching her use her "swipe" to get into any building, elevator, or classroom, I realized her campus had already taken many steps to ensure her safety and that of all the other students and faculty on campus—one of her college's most important jobs.



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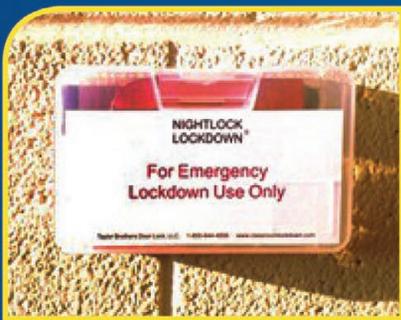
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