Case Study: Ripon College

Vanderbilt SMS Streamlines Access, Integrates Multiple Systems for Historic Ripon College

The Customer

Spanning more than 250 acres, with 26 buildings, Ripon College in Ripon, Wis., is home to more than 840 undergraduates. An intense engagement with and concern for academic, artistic and personal development of students has defined Ripon since its founding in 1851. With approximately 92 percent of students residing on campus, and many of the school's buildings built in the late 1800s, it was critical for Ripon to deploy a comprehensive safety and security program that streamlined access management across the expansive campus.

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The Challenge

Ripon faced several challenges, including outdated and unsupported access software, poorly supported controllers and readers, and an ID card system that was tied to outdated dining software. Additionally, the security team at Ripon sought a system that would enable heightened awareness of building security needs, including the need to lock down different areas of the campus in the event of an emergency and lift lockdown once complete. Ripon also needed a system that could tightly integrate various software systems, including student information system (SIS), dining and human resource systems.

"Before the update project, changes could take one to two days to implement. The management of early arrival/late departure was almost impossible and there was no universal lockdown functionality," said Gary Rodman, Director of Enterprise Applications, Ripon College. *"We needed to have granular control over individual and group access to buildings, as well as responsive support from a local integrator who had experience in the higher education sector."*

Ripon required the utilization of some existing access control hardware, along with the investment in new credentials and card readers for some recently constructed buildings throughout the campus – all of which needed to be managed from a

Customer: Ripon College, Wisconsin

Project Highlights:

- Centralized access management

- Lockdown capabilities

- Seamless integration between access hardware and software across platforms

- Campus-wide door updates with centralized management capabilities

- Data management between Vanderbilt SMS and SIS/HR software

- Streamlined event management

- Increased customer support through integration and manufacturer partnerss

central system that could integrate into a video management system (VMS). Integrator LaForce Inc. was tasked with the challenge of managing a condensed schedule with various summer conferences, upcoming school start dates and extensive cable installation in some buildings on the Ripon campus. LaForce has been a valued partner of Vanderbilt for more than a decade, working with various customers in a number of vertical markets.

"While the access control system in place at Ripon was functional on a basic level, the college had outgrown its capabilities. In addition, they had trouble finding parts for it and were often scrambling to replace faulty pieces," said Matt Zimmerman, Security Integration Project Manager, LaForce Inc. Ten of the 26 buildings on campus are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, so retrofitting doors with updated access hardware became a challenge. Ripon required a complete overhaul of its access control system, and worked with both LaForce Inc. and Vanderbilt to design, implement and test a lockdown solution. Ripon also needed help tying legacy systems in with updated hardware and software for a seamless integration that would allow significant cost savings to the university.

Vanderbilt SMS:

- Powerful open platform design easily integrates with other security and business systems.

- Intuitive interface minimizes system administration, management and maintenance.

- Unlimited reporting structure and detailed reporting options.

- Unlimited number of cardholders and readers allows for complete flexibility.

- Scalable to meet today's and tomorrow's needs.

- For more information on **Vanderbilt SMS**, please visit us at: **vanderbiltindustries.com**

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Ripon chose Vanderbilt after seeing the capabilities the company's access control solutions provided, along with the company's experience in the higher education market. Along with LaForce, updates to the Ripon College access control system took place campus-wide, with all 26 buildings seeing changes – and most with three to four doors in need of an update. *"We installed more than a dozen new readers that communicate directly with a customized system on Vanderbilt SMS,"* Zimmerman said.

The Solution

Ripon College used the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), an organization that serves Wisconsin's 24 private, nonprofit colleges and universities with programming to control college costs, to identify vendors that could meet the college's needs. As part of the organization's cost-savings program, WAICU works with vendors to develop the best collaborative agreements for institutions, with each service acting as a "collaborative dimension" – that is, it must be better in terms of cost and quality than an individual member could achieve on its own. The programs under WAICU have been vetted by the organization and do not require going through the request for proposal (RFP) process.

Ripon worked with Heartland Campus Solutions under the WAICU program, which has a strategic partnership with Vanderbilt, providing access control solutions to the higher education facilities with which Heartland works. As part of this collaboration, Vanderbilt's access control solutions are available to WAICU members at a discounted rate.

The Vanderbilt Security Management System (SMS) delivers Ripon a powerful, single-source solution for integrating a facility's access control technologies, digital video and alarm monitoring systems. The SMS is scalable, so Ripon can easily add readers and monitoring solutions to the system as they grow over time without the costly add-ons. From this single software platform, users can manage alarms, photo ID badging, visitor management, elevator control, offline and online locks, advanced reporting, and more.

The Results

Today more than ever, access control systems are heavily tied in to IT infrastructure, and Ripon needed Vanderbilt to help tie in the university's SIS, Jenzabar, to centrally manage permissions. Working with Vanderbilt VI Connect, customizable data management software, Ripon was able to take a single point of data entry on the Jenzabar software interface and have that information communicated to the Vanderbilt SMS, meal plan database, HR and other software platforms. Not only does this save the university time, it also reduces human error, streamlining and maintaining updates.
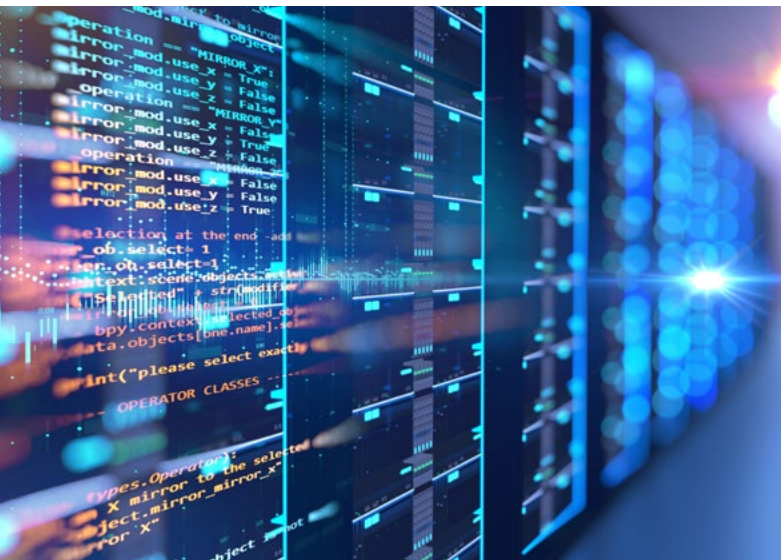
"Prior to this update, changes within the system could take anywhere from 24 to 48 hours, but now, changes to the system and full integration can now happen in three minutes," Rodman said. *"By working with VI Connect, we have seamless integration with our SIS and HR systems, and access is provisioned and revoked within minutes through the SMS as changes are made to the SIS and HR systems."*

Going further, the Vanderbilt SMS was able to help school officials streamline access for events. Once an event is scheduled within the SMS system, the doors will automatically unlock for an event, and then relock once the event is over. *"The scheduling abilities that the Vanderbilt SMS has makes it easy,"* Rodman said.

The new system allows the Director of Security, Conference Services and the One Card Office to formulate and verify access files with campus constituencies, as well as review security incidents. The One Card administrative assistant also is a main user of the system for card creation, and support on card-related and access issues. Rodman serves as the responsible party for troubleshooting any issues with the integration between the SIS and HR systems.

"Access control companies are working hard to tie all those systems together because it's much more convenient," Zimmerman said. *"It's common to have multiple technologies to integrate together, such as offline locks on dorms and dorm rooms, cards for a dining program, or academic buildings."*

Lockdown capabilities were also critical for the Ripon security team, and the university's previous system did not deliver this functionality consistently. The Vanderbilt SMS schedule doors based on different events or business rules, but also contains the necessary manual and automatic overrides that are critical to ensuring the safety and security of students. Going further, Ripon has engaged in critical partnerships with local police and firefighters who have cards so they can access or get around campus and override lockdowns, adding additional security and transparency in the event of an emergency situation.

"The Vanderbilt system is a full-featured solution with an intuitive user interface, and so far it has proven to be robust and stable," Rodman said. *"With this upgrade, we've laid the foundation for growth into other areas of access security, such as video surveillance, that wasn't possible before."*

"There really isn't anything that the Vanderbilt system can't do," Zimmerman said. *"With a lot of systems, there's functionality missing or they might lack compatibility. But the Vanderbilt system can do anything that we need it to do, and is customizable so that if issues arise, there's a good chance the will be able to solve the problem and implement new options in the future."*

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