Growing University Seeks to Make Campus More Secure

Cleveland State University is on the move. Historically a commuter college, the university is well on its way to becoming a more traditional university with significant on-campus housing. In pursuit of this goal, the university recently completed construction of the Euclid Commons residence halls; phase one opened in fall of 2010, and phase two opened in 2011. The four-building project housing over 600 students is the university's flagship residence hall with apartment-style living and state-of-the-art features for the modern student.

Improve Safety and Security

With society trends changing across the nation, CSU's Director of Security, Kenneth Murphy, stated, "These days, parents give considerable weight to safety/security when selecting a university for their kid to attend. To aid in giving parents peace-of-mind, this university has been committed to having first-class security at our new residence hall. We are protecting the parents' and our most valuable asset...the students."

Challenge

Mr. Murphy came on-board with CSU in 2009 after Euclid Commons phase one construction had already started. He saw that at existing residence halls, attendants monitoring the entrances were overwhelmed at times by a mass of students entering the facility.

Customer Profile

Client
- Cleveland State University

Location
- Cleveland, Ohio

Enrollment / Employees
- 6,000 / 1,600

Product
- Fastlane® Plus 30 MA

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Also, students coming in with their friends would often try to circumvent the process of signing in guests. "It was impossible and ineffective for staff to monitor everyone coming in. Understandably, everyday someone could slip by the attendant and having just one person slip by was an unacceptable risk," said Mr. Murphy. "Additionally, with three other universities in the Cleveland area, we had to compete and I wanted to prove that we could put a stop to unauthorized entries without a residence hall feeling like a cage."

CSU aimed to completely eliminate unauthorized access into Euclid Commons in order to better protect student residents.

Solution

The best solution for controlling access, Mr. Murphy decided, was optical turnstiles with barrier arms. Midway through phase one construction of Euclid Commons, he convinced the Administration that they needed to fund the installation of optical turnstiles at the resident hall entry points to regain control. After much research, including hands-on evaluation at the 2009 ASIS Annual Seminar & Exhibits, Mr. Murphy selected Fastlane Plus optical turnstiles from Smarter Security. "It was very meaningful while making a decision to have face-to-face interaction with their technical experts and executives at ASIS," Murphy said.

In order to funnel all traffic through the monitored entrances at Euclid Commons, CSU hardened all the other exterior doorways making them exit only. For the Euclid Commons phase one lobby that had already been built, the size of the selected optical turnstiles was critical because the lobby was small. Fastlane Plus won because of its more sleek design. It was the only competitive offering that could fit two lanes in the tiny lobby vestibule.

"Yes, the turnstiles have performed outstandingly since their install in 2009, but another significant factor in their selection was the fact that John Cocking (Smarter Security regional sales rep) bent over backwards to ensure that all went well for our university's first experience installing the turnstiles. He was extremely valuable in helping me educate our general contractor, architect, and integrator who had not worked with optical turnstiles before," said Mr. Murphy. "He was also extremely open and honest, which I respected."

Another unexpected benefit was that Smarter Security factory-trains many contracted installers, including CSU's contracted

Installer ExperTech Systems. "I could not have been more impressed by Jim Farmer's (ExperTech) commitment to a quality install," said Murphy. "Although it may sound like a line, it was going to be very difficult for the university to fail on this project with John Cocking and Jim Farmer involved."

The university installed two lanes next to the attendant's desk at the residence hall building entrance. The university decided that metal barrier arm units would be better than glass barrier arms due to cost and durability. "Students can be rough," said Mr. Murphy.

The desk would continue to be monitored 24x7 by an attendant, but the turnstiles would authenticate and allow access for all traffic, including when the attendant handled visitors and other few exceptions. Today, any visitor must sign in with the attendant and be escorted by a dorm resident before being allowed to pass through the turnstiles.

Result

With a significant investment of money and project time, Mr. Murphy was a little nervous on opening day in regards to how the students would react to the process change. "Upon energizing the turnstiles, I spent the first two hours on site watching and listening to reactions and looking for any reason to pull the plug. There was 100% positive response, and their acceptance was important to me," Murphy said. "In fact, the overwhelming response from the students when the barrier arms quickly lowered upon presenting their prox. cards was 'Cool.'" Both the users and the Administration were happy.

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