NC State University Implements HID's Next-Gen Credential Technology for Student ID Cards

North Carolina (NC) State University was founded in 1887 and is one of the world's leading public research universities with more than 44,000 undergraduate and graduate students and 300 degree programs offered through 68 departments. The university has more than 2,500 faculty and 7,100 staff members. NC State's Centennial Campus, spread across 2,500 acres, is a nationally acclaimed public-private research campus where several corporate, government and non-profit partners work alongside more than 70 research and academic units.

CHALLENGES:

Chronic Delays and Poor-Quality Cards

ID cards, also called Wolfpack One Cards, are a top priority for the security and safety of students, faculty and staff of NC State. These ID cards allow access to on-campus buildings, labs, residence halls, gyms, libraries and other restricted areas. They can also be used to link debit accounts, access athletic events, meal plans and serve as a proof of student status for campus activities. As student enrollment has continued to increase each year, NC State needed a reliable, innovative ID credential technology that could meet its highly specific requirements.

"We were facing major printing issues every day with jammed printers, delays in issuing cards to new students, and almost 10% card loss every week," said Chris Dunham, Director of One Card Operations at NC State. "It was frustrating. The past three generations of hardware didn't give us professional print quality. They underperformed, resulting in poor-quality student photos — even with a high-definition camera."

Wolfpack One Card was eager to launch a card issuance solution that would not only resolve printing issues but simplify operations and expedite both local and remote issuance. Such a solution would enable them to issue high-quality, multifunctional IDs to students, faculty and staff quickly and securely.

An Integrated, Cloud-Based Platform and the Market's Fastest Desktop Printer

NC State partnered with identification solution provider ColorID and selected HID® FARGO® Connect™, a cloud-based card issuance platform that integrates all elements of a secure card issuance program into a centralized and integrated system. This solution is designed to streamline operations, support ID card issuance programs, and increase control and security.

"The biggest challenge for NC State was that it required a high-resolution photo image of students and a dual-tech card with fully embedded stamp and seal," said Mark Degan, Director of Corporate Marketing at ColorID. "We were excited to introduce Chris to HID's premier secure issuance solution. With their in-house analytics, you can see that the reliability they gained is incredible. Not only are they not wasting thousands of HID multiCLASS® cards a year, they no longer have to monitor the system when batch printing hundreds of cards. HID FARGO Connect's cloud solution doesn't require any software to install, making NC State ready to scale up at a moment's notice whenever they need to add carding stations on or off campus."

ColorID also recommended the eco-friendly and energy-efficient HID FARGO HDP6600 printer that combines unique innovative features and patent-pending iON™ technology with unprecedented print speeds — making it the most advanced, efficient and fastest desktop-based retransfer printer available on the market today.

The HDP6600 produces high-definition ID cards in under 60 seconds and includes support for high-yield, full-color ribbon and laminate consumables — keeping costs at a minimum while maximizing productivity. The technology is able to produce ID cards with the highest image and text quality available, including brilliant color and sharp images with 600 dpi resin printing capabilities to precisely print small text, complex characters and crisply defined barcodes like never before.

"After years of reliability issues and too much card waste, it was time to try something else. ColorID guided us to a solution that fit our campus needs. I'm excited to say that we now have substantially reduced the time spent fixing jammed or failing printers and lowered the number of misprints. I realize it's a cliché to say this, but you get what you pay for, and unfortunately, we learned the hard way that price shouldn't be your primary concern. Instead, I believe the solution's total cost is what matters most," said Dunham.

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Chris Dunham
Director of One Card Operations
North Carolina State University

HID

RESULTS:

Streamlined Operations, Superior Card Quality and Robust Cost Savings

The Wolfpack One Card team was able to implement an innovative and cloud-based card issuance platform that eliminates multiple layers of costs, increases issuance process efficiencies and easily scales the card office to accommodate volume demands and future technologies. HID FARGO Connect has provided flexibility with printing contactless smart cards remotely during the pandemic, and ensures IDs and cards remain secure and are never accessible to unauthorized individuals. Even if print jobs are received at the remote location after normal operating hours, jobs remain locked down and cards will not print until an authorized employee has authenticated to the console.

It also provides a consistent print quality that allows the issuance of a professional-looking card to incoming students and faculty. NC State has experienced 99% cost savings with the use of the HDP6600 printers and HID FARGO Connect. The number of cards wasted in a year is almost negligible at only 0.16%, when previously that number was 10% in 2019.

Wolfpack One Card Services has produced over 40,000 cards since 2021and plans to implement printers in satellite locations, including the research center.

Contact information

Email: www.ColorID.com
Sales@ColorID.com
Phone: 704-987-2238

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