

# STUDENT EXPERIENCE & CHANGES IN STUDENT HABITS

The impact of  
student behaviors on  
on-campus operations

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**T**he on-campus student experience has been front and center since the return from remote instruction. And while the term “student experience” covers an incredibly broad set of important concepts, a key point around this has been facilitating the transition back to a traditional campus lifestyle.

Students’ habits and day-to-day lifestyles have changed since 2020. These changes have had implications on campuses and university staff who are charged with making the transition to hybrid or 100% on-campus learning as smooth as possible.

In this report, we will dissect what changes universities have implemented over the last two years to understand what challenges they are experiencing and what tools and solutions they are investing in to create better processes and an overall improved experience for both students and staff.

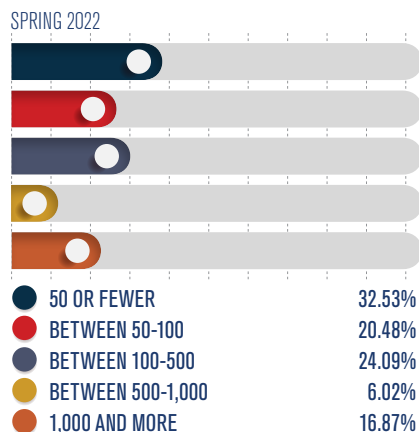
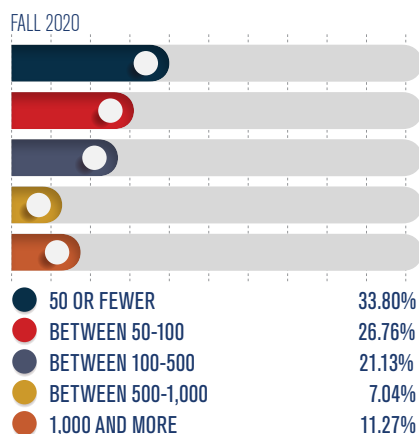
### The Surge in Student (and Faculty) Online Shopping Felt by Campus Mailrooms

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed shopping trends, as consumers adapted to shopping online versus in-store. While life may be to some extent ‘back to normal’, digital shopping trends remain a popular choice. What this means for campus operations is dealing with a higher parcel volume — and the potential pitfalls that entails — as students place a higher volume of orders online for supplies, equipment, clothing, and other needs.

In fact, in a recent survey of college and university operations professionals conducted by Spaces4Learning in cooperation with Quadient, we found a significant shift in parcel volume over the last 18 months (fall 2020 to spring 2022).

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### OVERALL DAILY CAMPUS MAILROOM VOLUME (packages/parcels per day), FALL 2020 Versus SPRING 2022, HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>



### Hiccups and Student Frustrations

This shift has led to some challenges that have impacted students. Increased deliveries have led to more difficulties for universities who rely on manual processes. More than 40% of respondents to our survey noted that their students had expressed frustration about delays in parcel deliveries in the last year.

### RESPONDENTS WHOSE STUDENTS EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION WITH PARCEL DELAYS IN THE LAST YEAR, SPRING 2022, HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>2</sup>



The reasons for the frustrations are varied and not always the fault of campus operations. For example, two survey respondents noted that delivery companies notify students that their packages have arrived before they actually have.

Said one: “Students are often notified through the shipping vendor (i.e., UPS, FedEx, USPS) that their package has been delivered before we have received the package in our mailroom.” This, of course, leads to confusion and frustration when a student arrives at a mailroom to pick up a delivery that hasn’t yet arrived.

Others noted that packages frequently arrive after mailroom hours or that the students themselves often wait longer before coming to pick up their packages, leading to issues with storage.

### Homegrown Challenges to Providing a Positive Student Experience

Campus operations have experienced several challenges within the campus mailroom owing to ineffective delivery processes. These challenges are now more severe than 18 months ago, when fewer students were on campus.

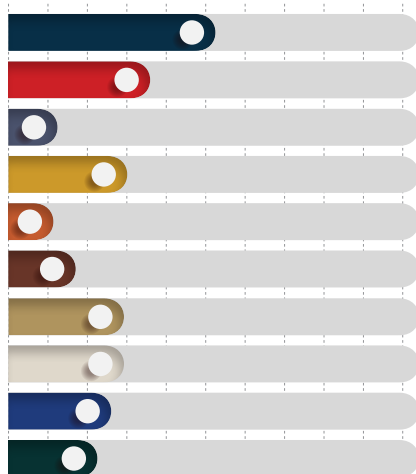


The biggest jumps in the concerns of campus operations staff were in the areas of package theft (up from 5.56% in 2020 to 22.12% in 2022) and long lineups for retrieval (up from 6.67% in 2020 to 12.5% in 2022). Other notable increases in concerns included

mailroom space/storage (up more than 10 points), staff shortages (up more than four points), accurate tracking (up more than five points), facilitating safe parcel collection (up more than two points), and accommodating larger packages (up more than four points).

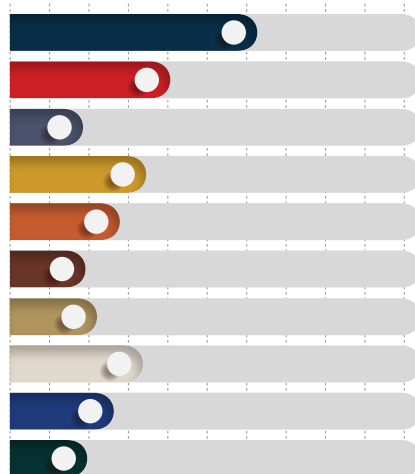
### BIGGEST MAILROOM CHALLENGES, FALL 2020 & SPRING 2022, HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>3</sup>

FALL 2020



MAILROOM SPACE/STORAGE	46.67%
NOT ENOUGH STAFF	30.00%
LONG LINE-UPS FOR RETRIEVAL	6.67%
ACCURATE TRACKING	23.33%
THEFT/SECURITY	5.56%
FACILITATING A SAFE PARCEL COLLECTION PROCESS	11.11%
MAILROOM HOURS	23.33%
ACCOMMODATING LARGER PACKAGES	23.33%
INTERNAL TRACKING	20.00%
OTHER	16.67%

SPRING 2022



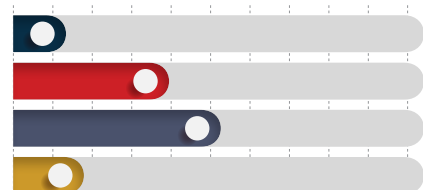
MAILROOM SPACE/STORAGE	56.73%
NOT ENOUGH STAFF	34.62%
LONG LINE-UPS FOR RETRIEVAL	12.5%
ACCURATE TRACKING	28.85%
THEFT/SECURITY	22.12%
FACILITATING A SAFE PARCEL COLLECTION PROCESS	13.46%
MAILROOM HOURS	16.35%
ACCOMMODATING LARGER PACKAGES	27.88%
INTERNAL TRACKING	20.19%
OTHER	13.46%

**Note:** Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents were asked to choose all responses that apply.

The only issue that saw a decrease in concern was mailroom hours, which fell from 23.33% in fall 2020 to 16.35% in spring 2022. Many campuses had extremely limited mailroom hours during the first year of the pandemic. In the most recent survey, there was a large surge in respondents whose mailrooms were open 24/7 or at least open during both weekdays and weekends.

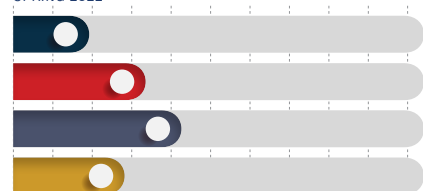
### MAILROOM HOURS FOR PICKUP, FALL 2020 VERSUS SPRING 2022, HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>4</sup>

FALL 2020



OPEN 24/7	7.61%
OPEN FOR LIMITED HOURS DURING THE DAY MONDAY TO FRIDAY BUT CLOSED ON WEEKENDS	33.70%
OPEN DURING BUSINESS HOURS MONDAY TO FRIDAY BUT CLOSED ON WEEKENDS	46.74%
OPEN DURING BUSINESS HOURS MONDAY TO FRIDAY AND A FEW HOURS ON THE WEEKEND	11.96%

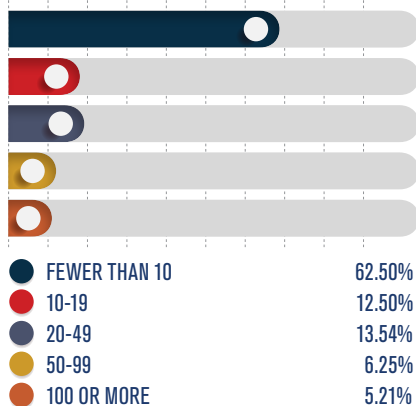
SPRING 2022



OPEN 24/7	13.27%
OPEN FOR LIMITED HOURS DURING THE DAY MONDAY TO FRIDAY BUT CLOSED ON WEEKENDS	27.55%
OPEN DURING BUSINESS HOURS MONDAY TO FRIDAY BUT CLOSED ON WEEKENDS	36.73%
OPEN DURING BUSINESS HOURS MONDAY TO FRIDAY AND A FEW HOURS ON THE WEEKEND	22.45%

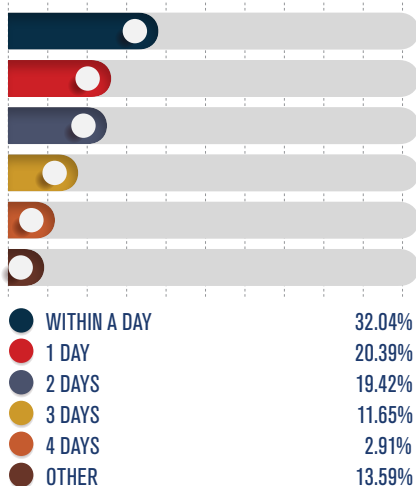
Parcel theft saw the biggest jump as a concern among survey respondents. In fall 2020, about 10% of respondents indicated that they experienced 10 or more thefts per year of student packages. This year, that's up to 37.5%.

### ANNUAL PARCELS STOLEN, SPRING 2022, HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>5</sup>



It should be noted that, despite all the challenges and frustrations, the bulk of campuses (52.43% of our respondents) are receiving, notifying, and handing over packages either same day or next day.

### “WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME BETWEEN RECEIVING THE PACKAGE, ALERTING THE RECIPIENT, AND THE RECIPIENT PICKING IT UP?”<sup>6</sup>

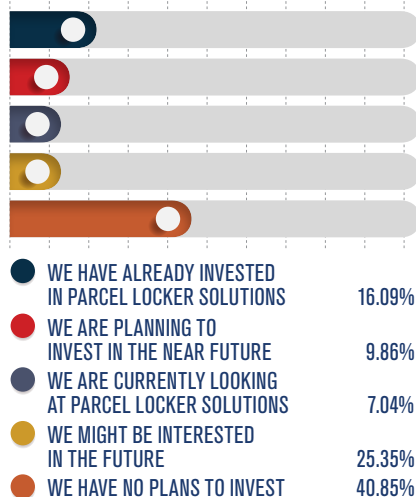


### Smart Lockers & Smart Tracking

Colleges and universities are starting to integrate smart locker solutions to improve the student experience on campus, as they enable contactless handoff of packages (and internal equipment, such as tablets or computers distributed by IT).

Most universities are planning to invest, are exploring options, or are expecting to invest in parcel lockers to meet their needs in the future, if they haven't implemented them already.

### “HAS YOUR INSTITUTION CONSIDERED INVESTING IN PARCEL LOCKER SOLUTIONS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR DELIVERY PROCESS?”<sup>7</sup>



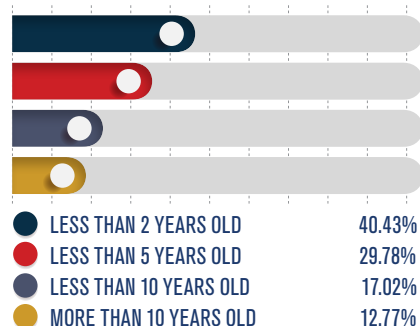
On the tracking side of the equation, respondents were divided fairly evenly between three types of tracking: commercial tracking software (31.24%), homegrown tracking software (34.38%), and manual tracking (34.38%).

### “HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY DELIVERING AND TRACKING VALUABLE INTERNAL EQUIPMENT (COMPUTERS, TABLETS, AV EQUIPMENT, ETC.)?”<sup>8</sup>



Among those currently using a parcel/mail tracking system, most (more than 70%) are using a system that is less than five years old, but a large chunk of respondents indicated they are using much older systems.

### AGE OF PARCEL/MAIL TRACKING SYSTEM<sup>9</sup>



A centralized distribution system can provide a number of benefits for universities: helping eradicate lost/stolen parcels, reducing space needed to store deliveries, expediting the overall delivery process, and providing up to 24/7 asset retrieval.

### Benefits of an Integrated Locker and Tracking System

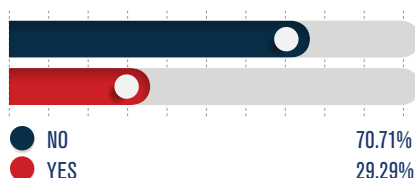
When integrated with asset tracking software, smart lockers can support deliveries beyond packages including library materials, bookstore merchandise, electronic equipment rentals, and more. This approach allows end recipients and other necessary



parties to easily stay informed about where various goods are on-campus – all from one unified platform.

In fact, a centralized distribution system can provide a number of benefits for universities: helping eradicate lost/stolen parcels, reducing space needed to store deliveries, expediting the overall delivery process, and providing up to 24/7 asset retrieval (depending on where the lockers are located).

**“DO YOU ANTICIPATE HAVING TO ADD MORE STAFF TO ACCOMMODATE THE GROWING PARCEL VOLUMES RECEIVED ON CAMPUS IN THE NEAR FUTURE?”<sup>10</sup>**



It should also be noted that smart lockers can help maximize staffing and budgetary allowances for universities by lightening the operational load for existing staff. This is especially important considering most campuses are not planning to increase staff at all, despite increases in parcel deliveries.

#### Methodology

For this survey, Quadient and Spaces4Learning polled our readership through an online survey that ran through May 2022. Our 105 respondents came primarily from public (49.02%) and private (25.49%) four-year institutions. The remainder were from two-year colleges (15.69%), trade/vocational institutions (8.82%), and graduate-only institutions (5.88%).

#### Sources

1, 3-4: Spaces4Learning/Quadient mailroom survey, fall 2020 and spring 2022  
2, 5-10: Spaces4Learning/Quadient mailroom survey, spring 2022

## About Quadient

Quadient is the market leader in parcel management and smart mail solutions for colleges and universities worldwide. With over 70 million packages delivered annually, Parcel Pending by Quadient has successfully helped thousands of institutions deliver MORE for their students, staff, and faculty with Campus Hub™, an integrated solution for asset tracking and campus deliveries.

For more information about how Campus Hub can work for your institution, visit: [parcelpending.com/markets/university-parcel-lockers/](https://parcelpending.com/markets/university-parcel-lockers/).

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