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RESOURCES

How Smart Lockers Improve the On-Campus Experience

From solving food insecurity challenges to delivering health and wellness essentials to students in need, smart lockers serve campus hubs in a variety of ways.

AS FOOD INSECURITY CONTINUES TO IMPACT STUDENTS

across the State University of New York (SUNY) system, leadership took decisive action to close the gap, ensuring students have access to essential resources and can do so with dignity. The right solution? Smart lockers.

Now a staple of campus hubs, smart lockers go beyond package pickup—offering secure, discreet delivery of health and wellness essentials to students who need them. Food essentials are no exception.

In September 2024, SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr.

announced a pilot program to expand food pantry capacity at five SUNY campuses using automated food lockers, which allow students to access food during hours when campus food pantries are closed. Many college students today struggle with the ease of accessing food, with a June 2024 analysis from the **Government Accountability Office** noting that about 3.8 million college students (about 23%) experienced food insecurity.

“At SUNY we won’t let them face it alone,” **a release from the SUNY Board of Trustees** noted at the pilot’s announcement, adding that the program marks “another step toward

making good healthy food accessible, when a student needs it. By removing this worry, students can concentrate on getting a good education at our colleges and universities.”

As smart lockers become more common on college campuses, their uses continue to evolve. They play a key role in enhancing the student experience. Here’s how these solutions are expanding beyond mail and package delivery to make a broader impact across campus life.

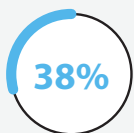
Mobile Ordering and Food Delivery, Wherever It’s Most Convenient

Like SUNY, **Bunker Hill Community College** in Boston has turned to smart lockers to serve anywhere from 50 to 60 students every week, alleviating food insecurity while removing the stigma or anxiety students may otherwise face from seeking help. When orders or meals are ready for pickup, students receive a text alert and can retrieve items discretely at their convenience. The lockers are refrigerated and automated, allowing students who participate in the college’s DISH Food Pantry program — Delivering Information, Sustenance and Health — the option to pick up food and other supplies such as diapers, baby food, and sanitary supplies, or place orders using an app on their phone. “Our students are incredibly busy,” **said former BHCC senior**

Food Insecurity in Higher Education



Of students at a two-year institution were affected by food insecurity¹



Of students at a four-year institution were affected by food insecurity²



Of community college students report experiencing food insecurity³



Of college students have gone an entire day without eating⁴



Beyond bookstore materials, the lockers allow students to pick up any items that can be delivered by or purchased through the college, including IT assets, library resources, event tickets, and other bookstore merchandise, in addition to food pantry items.

special programs coordinator Molly Hansen. “They work demanding jobs and, many times, are only available after business hours or on the weekend. We wanted to come up with a way for students to access their food pantry orders within a time schedule that worked for them and for the staff at Bunker Hill.”

Bunker Hill’s Charleston campus installed two refrigerated smart locker towers and one standard smart locker tower to deliver dry, non-perishable food or hygiene products. Before the lockers were installed, DISH staff had to schedule individual orders via multiple communication methods and coordinate in-person pickups.

Today, “our students love the flexibility and how easy it is to use the lockers,” Hansen said.



Even for students who aren't facing hunger, smart lockers serve as an important way to pick up food between classes, when they may not have the time to visit a cafeteria and would otherwise skip a meal. Campuses can streamline food services by integrating smart lockers. These lockers allow students to order from their phones and pick up meals or snacks at their convenience—fresh items from refrigerated units and non-perishables from standard lockers.

Assets, IT, Library Materials and More

Valencia College in Orlando, FL, turned to smart lockers as a means to more easily and securely distribute bookstore purchases, offering a pickup point for shipped items as well as in-store or curbside pickups of mobile orders. Beyond bookstore materials, the lockers allow students to pick up any items that can be delivered by or purchased through the college, including IT assets, library resources, event tickets, and other bookstore merchandise, in addition to food pantry items.

"Lockers have become an exchange point system for all of the different campus services today," said Robert Zinsky, vice president of business development at **Parcel Pending by Quadient**, manufacturer of campus smart locker solutions.

Smart lockers also give campus departments an easy, secure way to collect returns and donations. Students can drop off bookstore or IT items after hours, avoiding lines and rigid business hours. With built-in audit trails and asset tracking, these services stay secure and accessible 24/7.

Supporting Wellness and Student Services

Campus health centers now use smart lockers to give students secure, discreet access to medications, medical devices, hygiene supplies, and sensitive documents. Likewise, some administrative offices have adopted lockers to streamline essential tasks—allowing students to pick up, sign, and return checks or loan applications at their convenience. By enabling 24/7 access, smart lockers remove delays and allow students to manage important business on their schedule.

SOURCE:

1,2,3,4 Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, "**College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report**," April 2019



SOLUTIONS

Achieve More With Smarter, Connected Lockers

Convenience and elevated student experiences start with Parcel Pending by Quadient's cloud-based software.

WHEN SELECTING A SMART LOCKER SOLUTION, IT'S essential to consider the full range of campus use cases, ideal locations, and locker features that support diverse student needs. Look for solutions that offer flexibility, visibility, and control by ensuring secure delivery, reliable tracking, and broad service coverage across your campus. Parcel Pending by Quadient offers the cloud-based Campus Hub solution, which provides a secure, seamless platform for managing not only package deliveries, but also campus-wide distribution of IT assets, library materials, move-in supplies, and more, solving a wide range of campus life needs.

"The university space as a whole, and the demographics schools serve, have changed dramatically," said Robert Zinsky, vice president of business development at Parcel Pending by Quadient. "Colleges are no longer educating just 18- to 21-year-olds. They serve parents going back to school, and basically a whole other population of individuals. They needed to change, and their service delivery models are changing, just as the expectations of the individuals they serve have changed. Lockers serve more than mail services."

As new challenges arise, campuses should prioritize smart locker features that empower them to adapt by ensuring the solution can flex to meet evolving student needs and services. Here are a few of the most important features that ensure campuses will gain more from their smart locker investment.

Seamless Integration and Connectivity with Campus Systems

Campuses with existing asset or inventory management tools shouldn't need to overhaul their systems to adopt smart lockers. Parcel Pending by Quadient lockers are carrier-agnostic, enabling access by multiple delivery providers for added flexibility and convenience. Parcel Pending smart locker solutions integrate smoothly with existing campus technologies and management platforms, simplifying day-to-day operations while ensuring efficient communication, tracking, and support.

Tracking and Audit Trails

Parcel Pending by Quadient's smart locker platform has a comprehensive audit trail that streamlines operations by tracking every parcel and asset's chain of custody. This visibility helps staff save hours on administrative tasks while ensuring shippers and recipients stay informed throughout the delivery cycle. Enhanced tracking strengthens security, reliability, and peace of mind, especially when managing high-value assets for student use off-campus.

Branded Smart Lockers: Enhancing Campus Identity

Smart lockers stationed in high-traffic areas serve their practical purpose and act as dynamic visual assets for campuses. Customizing lockers with school colors and mascots transforms them into vibrant branding tools, reinforcing school spirit and leaving a lasting impression on visitors and prospective students.

The Key to Efficiency & Exceptional Service

With countless demands placed on staff, from managing logistics to ensuring timely service, efficiency is more critical than ever. Smart lockers provided by Parcel Pending by Quadient simplify package management with seamless loading, handheld scanning, and real-time locker availability tracking. By automating deliveries and reducing manual tasks, institutions can optimize workflows, enhance productivity, and improve student satisfaction, all while freeing up staff to focus on higher-priority responsibilities.



Parcel Pending by Quadient is the leading provider of innovative parcel management solutions for higher education institutions worldwide, designed to make parcel deliveries and returns easy and intuitive for everyone. With more than 100 years of innovation supporting our clients' mail and parcel needs, Parcel Pending by Quadient solutions ensure secure, convenient student parcel deliveries and on-campus asset exchanges.

Schedule a free consultation today to streamline, simplify, and enhance campus operations with smart parcel lockers.

<https://go.quadient.com/4IBJeOW>