

University of Alberta

Summary

[University of Alberta](#) in Edmonton, Alberta, is a Top 5 Canadian University and one of the Top 100 in the world. It is home to more than 500 graduate programs, 200 undergraduate programs and 450 active student groups.

FTE:

The UofA has a student population of 40,000 students from over 148 countries and has graduated over 275,000 alumni. It employs 15,000 staff over 18 different faculties with some of the most advanced research facilities, equipment and resources in the country.

About the Card Program:

The University of Alberta ONEcard program launched in 1996 began as a replacement to the aging photocopy card program. Since then it has grown into an essential campus program being *“the ONE card you need on campus”* connecting students to the library, copying, printing, phys ed & rec facilities, events, dining, laundry, building access, meal plans, vending, residence suites and transit. It is the University of Alberta’s transaction processing system and clears millions of transactions every year.

With a footprint of over 50 square blocks on the main campus, ONEcard supports an external merchant program that falls within that space. There are over 30 food merchants external to the University accepting ONEcard with either a stand-alone terminal or a full POS system. The internal dining program operates with both declining balance and an anytime dining program with over 40 POS locations over the campus.

Organizational Division & IT Support:

ONEcard is part of the University of Alberta’s ancillary services team and is supported by central ancillary IT who also responds to Parking, Residence, and Conference services. This team works to support systems like TouchNet, Peoplesoft, Papercut, Pharos, Swiftdata, MyPhoto, and CBORD. This team also installs and maintains equipment for ONEcard access, attendance tracking, payment terminals and POS. The ONEcard currently supports a magnetic stripe, a barcode, and proximity card technology. They strive for excellence in campus partnerships, real-time integrations, online services and most of all excellence in customer service.



Connecting Students Online

Students can perform a number of transactions online through the authenticated site. These transactions include checking account balance, reviewing transaction history, depositing funds, reporting cards lost/stolen, uploading photos, purchasing meal plans, enrolling in supplementary classes, reserving a locker, requesting an account adjustment, or making a donation to the food bank on campus.

Challenges on Campus

One of the biggest challenges on a campus this large is creating the roadmap for the campus credential. With a very large campus, decisions can happen at a departmental level that may not fall in line with the big picture. Another challenge is ensuring the campus overall, stays connected; to have systems all speaking to each other to best serve the community. Ultimately the campus card program should make student life on campus easier, and should reduce the occasions where students need to self-administer access to goods and services. By having highly integrated systems, students show up and are immediately connected to everything that will support them based on their relationship to the campus. It allows the student the opportunity to focus on what they should be doing: learning.

Just Down the Road

As the need for a physical “card” is replaced with mobile options, there is a need to invest in technologies that will support a mobile credential. This means investing in equipment that will be compatible with a variety of technologies. Although making an immediate switch may not be possible, the solutions installed today can be future-proofed for a simpler transition in the near future. Mobile solutions will create convenience and real world experience, and eliminate the demand for physical cards in general. With this also comes the potential need to rebrand with a new name.... The “ONE-credential” just doesn’t have the same ring to it.



Into the Future

A ONEcard program that has been operational for over 23 years has a lot of data. What needs to be evaluated is:

- How much of this data should be retained?
- Who invests in the interpretation of this data?
- What relevance does this information have?
- What opportunities can it provide to recruitment of new students?
- How can it impact student success and retention of current students?

ONEcard will continue to look at opportunities to share this data where it improves institutional decision-making and contributes to and enhances student experience at the University of Alberta.