

## University of Oklahoma's Dramatic and Proactive Shift in Credential Technology



### Sooner Card Program Highlights

- › Greater than 27,000 students
- › More than 7,500 contactless cards by Fall 2015
- › More than 1,500 door readers; 400 contactless to date
- › Gradual transition for all cards and readers to reach a completely contactless environment for their campus

### Goals of OU's Technology Shift

- › Reduce friction
- › Increase speed of throughput at dining locations
- › Transition gradually for convenience of and adoption by students
- › Offer numerous form factors
- › Enable mobile credential in future

When the University of Oklahoma decided to re-brand its campus card program in the winter of 2014, campus leaders knew it was time to also begin a dramatic shift in its overall credential technology.

Every new Sooner Card issued by the university includes not only a fresh new design marking the 125th anniversary of the school, but also a high-security Mifare DESFire EV1 chip that enables secure contactless transactions all around campus.

“Our main goal in deploying a contactless credential is to reduce friction wherever we can,” said Ryan Trevino, Director of the Sooner Card program. “We chose the Mifare Desfire credential because it improves the student experience today and also give us the most flexibility for future applications.”

## Speed at Dining Locations a Big Factor in Student Experience

The University of Oklahoma team felt that saving seconds at the point of sale by enabling a student to simply tap to pay could make a big difference for students. “Speed of throughput at retail locations and our self-operated dining facilities is important,” Trevino said.

Blackboard played a consultative role helping the school understand the technologies available to them and evaluating the best options for their campus.

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## Contactless Technology Planning and Gradual Adoption

The University of Oklahoma began laying the foundation for an NFC-based contactless credential in 2012 when it started deploying Blackboard's line of NFC-compatible hardware.

With nearly 400 contactless readers installed to date, their deployment is far-reaching, allowing for contactless transactions for access control across campus including the event and fitness centers; and also point of sale, vending, and laundry transactions as well. Still, the transition to contactless has been a gradual one.

"We have a large deployment of Blackboard access control but a lot of the reader base was mag stripe only," Trevino said. "For the last

three years, we've been exclusively deploying combo readers that read both the mag stripe and contactless, setting in place the migration path. The driver in determining whether to re-card versus phase-in the new technology over time had to do with the fact that we still had a large number of mag stripe readers."

With more than 1,500 door readers deployed on campus today, the Norman, Oklahoma-based school plans to continue replacing existing units as they move toward a completely contactless environment.



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Ryan Trevino  
Director, Sooner Card Program

## NFC & Plans for Mobile Credential

One of the reasons the University of Oklahoma was attracted to Blackboard's NFC technology was the opportunity to enable a mobile credential in the future. Seeing the direction the industry was moving and with more handset manufacturers adopting the NFC protocol, the university knew it was only a matter of time before NFC would become the standard for mobile transactions. "As with most campuses, the future is with mobile credentials," Trevino said. "We know the NFC format will help lay the foundation for our university."

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When evaluating the various options available to them, the University of Oklahoma chose the Desfire EV1 credential over other options based not only on its security but also

its openness. “We needed a credential that provided us flexibility and Desfire gave us the most forward-looking option in regards to third-party reader support,” said Trevino.

**“Getting the Sooner Card means the world to students. When the card comes out of the printer personalized for a student, and you hand it to them, you’re welcoming them into the OU family.”**

## Single Program, Many Form Factors

Serving people with mobility issues was also important. Having piloted contactless wrist bands previously for a small population, the university was confident that standardizing on a Desfire EV1 credential would provide for numerous form factor options that would enable them to best serve this part of their community.

“We wanted a single format with a variety of options when it came to form factors,” said Trevino. “Form factors are important to providing access to students with mobility concerns.”

Founded in 1890, The University of Oklahoma today serves more than 27,000 undergraduate and graduate students in a variety of studies.

## Vital Connection to the University Community

The university began re-carding a small population of just 1,500 students. Incoming Fall 2015 freshmen will be the first to be broadly re-carded, approximately 4,200 additional cards.

Eventually anyone carrying an official Sooner Card, including students, faculty, and staff, will be re-carded with the Desfire EV1

credential. Trevino views the campus card as being a vital connection to the university community. “Getting the Sooner Card means the world to students. When the card comes out of the printer personalized for a student, and you hand it to them, you’re welcoming them into the OU family.”

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