



# Francis Marion University

## Customer case study

### TECHNOLOGY/PRODUCTS

- Fargo DTC400 Direct-to-Card Printer/Encoder

### TOP REASONS WHY FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY CHOSE FARGO PRINTERS

- Faster speeds for heavy use during orientation
- Reasonable cost for budget-conscious university
- Additional security features, including fluorescing ribbon, for future needs

*"Campus police want to link students to their ID cards, so it is a policy that students must have their ID card on them at all times."*

*Paul Dove,  
Professor and Dean,  
Francis Marion University*

### Security no longer elusive at Francis Marion University thanks to enhanced use of ID cards.

#### Challenge

Named for Revolutionary War hero General Francis Marion, otherwise known as the "Swamp Fox" for his elusive tactics, Francis Marion University wants to be anything but elusive when it comes to security.

"This university has used ID cards since day one, back in 1970, when it used simple laminated paper cards to identify its students," said Paul Dove, Professor and Dean of the James A. Rogers Library, and the faculty member responsible for the ID card program. Even universities located away from major cities need to think about security, but at Francis Marion, located on 400 acres seven miles east of Florence, S.C., security is just one of many uses for the ID cards carried by students, faculty and staff.

Francis Marion is a state-affiliated institution with 200 faculty members and 4,200 students, 10 percent of whom are graduate students following a business, education or psychology program. The card is an important part of student life at the university, providing access to a wide range of services. Cards are used for access into campus facilities, such as the Cauthen Educational Media Center, with its resource center, auditorium and TV studio, and to the Academic Computer Center. Students also use ID cards to borrow library books, attend athletic events or even check out a bucket of tennis balls. "We use them all over the campus in a variety of places," said Dove. In addition, the staff card identifies the institution as "an agency of the state of South Carolina," serving as a state-issued ID card for travel purposes. The Florence Regional Airport also honors the ID cards of faculty and staff for free parking in its parking lot.

Students, faculty and staff also can use their ID cards as debit cards for a safe, convenient way to make purchases without having to carry cash. They can buy food in the cafeteria or purchase books from the book store. "Individuals just go into our accounting department and put money into their account," said Dove. "It's easy, and it cuts down on our accounting costs. Parents can add money to a student's account, and the students use the money on campus." To encourage use of debit cards, the university offers a 10 percent discount on faculty and staff meal purchases made with the card.

Cards are issued from the university's central database and given at no charge to students during registration. Replacement cards, however, cost a student \$15 unless there's been a name change. Cards issued after registration also are subject to a \$15 late fee.

#### Solution Found

As its card usage has evolved, so has Francis Marion's card printing capability. Early printers were big and bulky, according to Dove. In 2005, the school began using a Fargo DTC400 Direct-to-Card Printer/Encoder, a much smaller, more convenient printer. According to Bruce Bacon of Alarsys, the Fargo systems integrator, "The DTC400 gives them faster speeds than their previous printer. That's especially important during the school's crunch times. They make ID cards primarily in the summer, when freshmen come in four times for orientation. Each time, they make 250 cards during two days." Bacon says the DTC400 also provides additional security features, such as fluorescing ribbon, for the school's future needs.





Direct-to-Card technology uses dye-sublimation printing, which applies heat to a dye-based ribbon that is divided into four main colors. During printing, a printhead passes over the ribbon, heating the dyes on the ribbon, which then applies colors to a blank card. By combining colors and varying the heat, the printer can produce up to 16.7 million colors.

Dove also likes the cost. Student ID cards run about 50 cents each, with the exception of proximity cards, which cost close to \$5 each because of the additional embedded technology. Proximity cards contain microprocessor chips and need only to be held close to a card reader to engage. They are used in the dorm for seniors and in the nursing building. While there is no plan to use proximity cards throughout the campus just yet, according to Dove, additional uses are being found, especially as the university plans new facilities.

The question of how much technology to include in a student ID card is not an easy one to answer. Francis Marion University introduced a magnetic stripe into its cards in the 1980s, remembered Dove, in addition to the bar code on the front of the card, used for library checkout. The card's bar code also authenticates remote access to many of the library's electronic resources.

### Results

"Use of ID cards is a matter of public safety," Dove said. "Campus police want to link students to their ID cards, so it is a policy that students must have their ID card on them at all times. We are a rural campus, and we have fewer security problems than some of the larger, urban schools, so we don't require students to wear their cards. They just have to have them with them." Administrators believe the emphasis at a university should be on education and learning, and security measures should be unobtrusive. Just as the university strives to be responsive to the changing needs of the region, it also strives to be responsive to the changing needs of its faculty, students and staff. And there's nothing elusive about that.

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