



Mercer University Includes Temperature Screening Kiosks in Campus Safety Program

Georgia-based university teaches how to stay committed to in-person learning while prioritizing student well-being.



SNAPSHOT

Industry & Application

Higher Education

Company Profile

Founded in 1833, Mercer University is one of the nation's longest-running secondary education schools.

Area of improvement

Launch and maintain a campus safety program that includes a health initiative aimed at maintaining student and faculty wellbeing.

Technology Solution

A free-standing Temperature Screening Kiosk that produces fast, contact-free results.

Outcome

Nearly 40 Temperature Screening Kiosks protect primary access-points across 12 campuses. No students with a fever enter high-traffic areas, keeping the spread of illness at bay.

In the wake of a global pandemic that first took the nation by storm the spring of 2020, Mercer University was forced to look at its campus safety and security program through a new lens. The responsibility to ensure student safety from unwelcome intruders still exists, but now a new threat—contagious diseases—has enrolled as a dangerous risk. Mercer is sincere in its mission to serve the students attending its Georgia campuses—a commitment they have always felt is best achieved through in-person learning and a thriving staff and student population. As one of America's oldest higher education institutions dating back over 185 years, it's no surprise Mercer University is leading by example with a proactive, progressive approach.

CHALLENGE

Launch a multifaceted safety program

Like most other universities in the nation, Mercer transitioned to online instruction in March 2020 to support a global initiative aimed at stemming the spread of the novel coronavirus. With the summer sessions and the Fall semester looming on the horizon, Mercer's leadership focused on a mission upheld since 1833 – serve the campus community to its best ability. An enhanced, multi-faceted campus safety program was set into motion. The new program included a wellness component—the Bears Care Health Initiative. The goal: welcome students and staff to a top-tier university operating on a solid foundation of wellness protocols.

Across 12 schools and colleges, Mercer's family includes 8,759 enrolled students and 1,892 faculty and staff members. Initially, manual health screenings were employed. Man-powered temperature checks and screening questions proved inefficient, plus it permitted increased exposure. Ken Boyer, Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services, knew that minimal on-going manpower would be a must for a successful screening program.

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“Mercerians were put here for times like these. Even in challenging times, our purpose is never lost. We continue to teach. To learn. To create. To discover. To inspire. To empower. To serve. And we will emerge stronger than ever.”

– The Mercer University Motto

MERCER
UNIVERSITY

SOLUTION

Implement self-running screening technology

When Ken Boyer was introduced to the Temperature Screening Kiosk by his dedicated account manager, he was immediately interested in the possibilities it presented. The kiosk's robust but customizable features are a perfect fit in the higher-education setting. Engineered to operate without manpower involvement, Temperature Screening Kiosks are a self-running device that can continually check students for elevated temperatures, one right after another. “The automated nature of the Temperature Screening Kiosks absolved the need for excess staff involvement,” said Ken.

With a focusing distance up to three feet from the device, the kiosk is fully contact-free, bypassing device cleaning between screenings. Precise infrared thermal imaging picks up body temperature in less than 1 second at a +/- 0.9 Fahrenheit accuracy rate. Measurement is very accurate even with students coming in from outside where it may be very hot. With no hardwiring or permanent fastening required, the Temperature Screening kiosks offered the flexibility to move to different locations as screening needs change. “The plug and play nature of the units has them up and running in 10 minutes—assembly and setup has been a breeze,” Ken shared. He goes on to say, “The pass/fail results appear clearly on the device, but we also use the alarm feature that sounds when a scan detects a temperature over 100 degrees F. They will be stopped by a building steward at that time. Since we require students and faculty to wear face masks while in our buildings, we've activated the device's face mask detection mode. The Temperature Screening Kiosk will not proceed with a scan until it identifies a mask.” To further propel Mercer's self-service model, individuals now answer health questions using the Campus Clear application.

RESULTS

Safer institutions for faculty and staff

What started as a trial-run with one Temperature Screening Kiosk quickly expanded to nearly forty units in play today at multiple campus locations; more will likely come. When asked how he'd grade performance, Ken says, “The Temperature Screening Kiosks have been a great success. They are accurate, fast, and we've experienced no issues. We employ them at University main entrances, access points into student buildings, the dining halls, and administrative buildings. Where traffic is especially high, we use two kiosks to create dual lanes—this has worked very well to alleviate bottlenecks.” Now, Ken is exploring the devices' reporting capabilities, which includes valuable traffic volume data.

The Temperature Screening Kiosks are one part of a well-formulated health initiative. The first step was a health test requirement before students could come to campus. When Mercer University students returned, they received a Bears Care Kit. The kits included cloth masks sporting the Mercer mascot, a bottle of hand sanitizer, a digital thermometer, a symptom checklist, and more.

Ken Boyer reports that cases of illness have stayed low and manageable at all campus communities, helped by the implementation of Temperature Screening Kiosks. To learn more about Mercer University, visit www.mercer.edu.



Temperature Screening Kiosk at Mercer University



Bears Care Kit issued to all incoming students

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