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WESTERN CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY

Key Management Provides More Reliability, Safety For 5,600+ Students

Traka Solutions in Education

The Challenge

Never has there been such a focus on security in educational institutions than there is today. In addition to protecting people – students and staff – key management systems are just as vital in protecting valuable assets - vehicles, machinery, equipment, electronics and the buildings themselves.

Keysets can easily go missing, putting facilities at significant risk. But with electronic key management systems, no matter the campus size, schools can mitigate that risk and reduce loss of property and of people.

With two campuses encompassing 398 acres, 5,600+ students, and more than 875 staff, safety is the number one priority at Western Connecticut State University. So, it was imperative a new key management system would help the school ensure campus-wide safety by tracking physical keys.

> *"In years past, people would carry a monstrous key ring that would inevitably get them into just about everything that they needed. The loss of a single master key could cost us as much as $20,000 to rekey an entire building."*
>
> **Luigi Marcone**
> Chief Facilities Officer and AVP for Campus Planning

The Solution

Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut chose Traka to replace their previous system for more reliable performance and data integrity.

The school wanted to be able to give individual users access to specific keys versus having to always carry the keys to every building with them at all times, which also made loss a bigger risk.

> *"Safety is a priority at Western Connecticut State University. With all the technological advances and security systems including using card access and cameras or using your phone to unlock doors, people often forget about the physical key as a potential vulnerability."*
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> **Deanna Schaab**
> Director of Access Control and One Card Services

The university had issues with its previous system: ghosting in databases, corrupt databases, a sync function that sometimes worked, sometimes didn't, and did not give any error indication.

"Our biggest pain point was that the notches in the fobs had to be inserted face down. The problem with that was the system still allowed you to return the fob even if the notch was facing in the up position. It then allowed the next user into the box to be able to pull that fob and we would have no record," Schaab said.

The campus installed 17 Traka cabinets with more than 1,200 users, 542 items and approximately 3,500 keys across both its campuses. The Traka cabinets are used by faculty, staff, students, administrators, contractors, affiliates, law enforcement — anyone that needs access to a secured location.

"We used the Traka System to put some technology around tracking those physical keys."

Luigi Marcone

The university is also managing its vehicles through the Traka system, including those that faculty, staff and employees can reserve and all of the maintenance vehicles.

Traka's key cabinets help the university manage and control access to:

Keys   Access badges   Vehicles

Tablets   Laptops   Radios

Equipment   Weapons

The Results

"Providing a level of control over the mechanical lock gives us a sense of security and a sense of stability," Marcone said "It also gives us a tracked record with a date and timestamp as to when somebody may have withdrawn a key from a key box, which gives us an audit trail in the event something does go wrong."
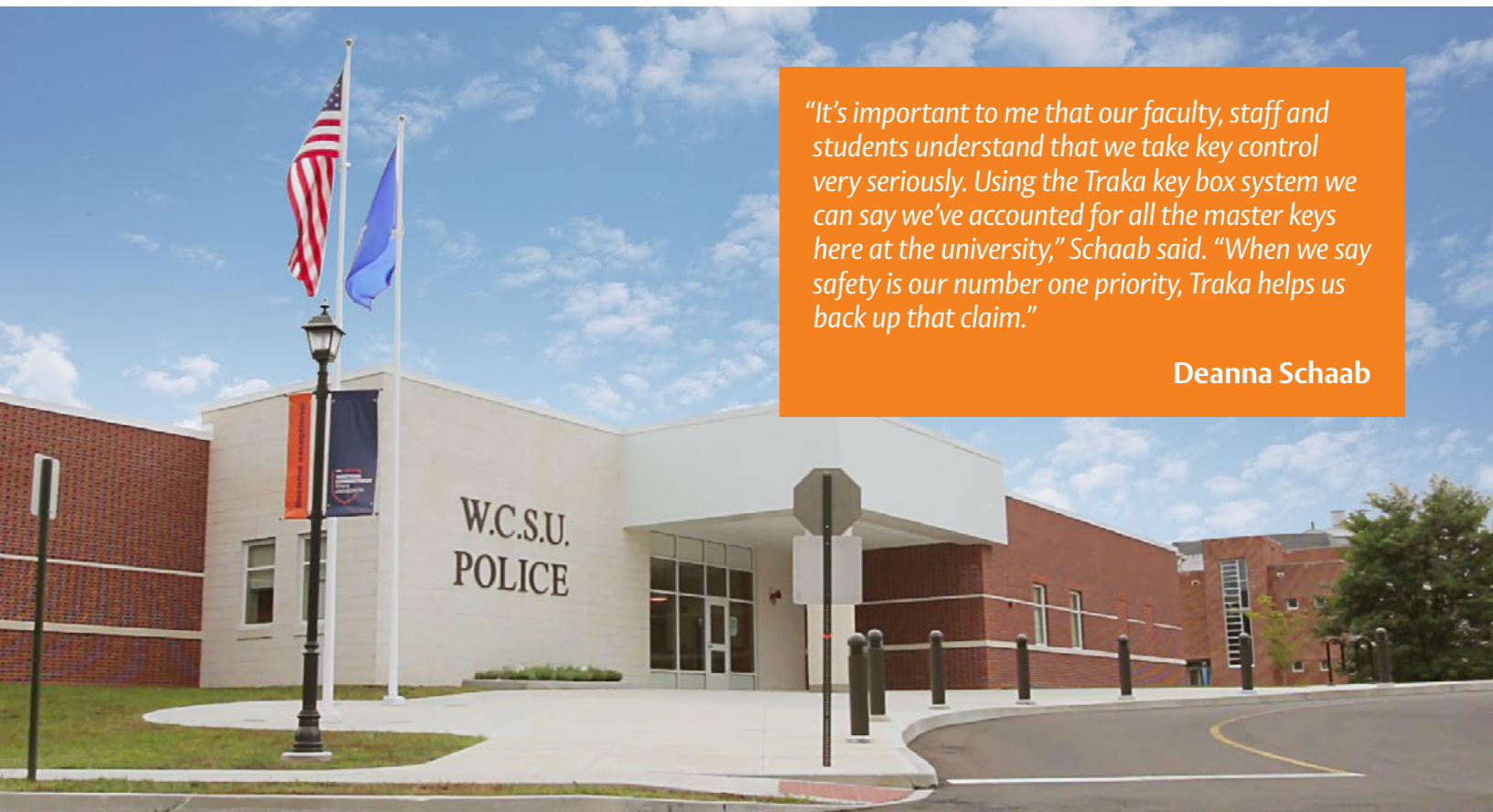
The web-based platform has saved the university time and labor, as locksmiths can program key boxes no matter where they are on campus. They are also able to have clerical staff manage updates and card numbers, as well as assign access by simply checking a box.

"The incidental, incremental cost of having an electronic control system like the Traka Key Box System provides a much more cost effective solution to avoid the inevitable expense of having to rekey a building," explained Marcone.

"The university also has its own police department, and each of the officers uses a Traka system within the department to pull their duty tags for each shift," Schaab said. "If there's ever an emergency event on campus, our police can respond directly to the building, use the key system in that building and take the tags from that box to unlock areas within the building. There's no need to stop at the police department – possibly delaying their response time – in order to gain entrance."

"As we've rolled out the cabinets to our academic and administrative departments, there has been an increased demand because our end users love using the new system, " Schaab said.

Future implementation plans include replacing all the older cabinets on campus, integrating the Traka system with the current access control system and adding more reporting for end users to show the effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

"It's important to me that our faculty, staff and students understand that we take key control very seriously. Using the Traka key box system we can say we've accounted for all the master keys here at the university," Schaab said. "When we say safety is our number one priority, Traka helps us back up that claim."

Deanna Schaab

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