



# Grand Rapids Community College Gets the Upper Hand on Security

## Protects Critical Areas with Biometric HandKey II Readers

“We can do everything from a laptop, controlling the doors and monitoring activity.”

- Scott A. Martin, Facilities Department  
Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC)

### Summary

GRCC’s HandKey readers are deployed to the most critical areas that need protection. One is on the door to the school’s data center, while the other two work together to protect access to the Cashier’s office and vault.

### Business Need

A card access system was in place at the campus, but it did not provide sufficient protection for critical areas against potential theft of data and resources or vandalism. Of particular interest were the main computer data center and the cashier’s office, where substantial amounts of cash are handled.

Grand Rapids Community College occupies an eight-block downtown campus. It serves approximately 16,000 full-time students enrolled in more than 1,600 liberal arts and occupational courses, as well as almost 6,000 continuing education students.



### STATISTICS

Industry: Education

Application: Access Control

Biometric: HandKey II

Hand Readers: 3

Users: 1,000

Geography: United States

## Challenges

The college's original card access system was adequate for most locations where it was used, but it was not well-monitored. One problem was that cards were easy to pass from one person to another, and lost cards could be misused. To overcome these problems, GRCC started moving toward a Blackboard one-card system about three years ago, to be used for parking and point-of-sale purchases as well as to door security. The new card system worked well for these applications, but a higher level of security was needed for the specific data center and financial areas.

## Solution

Each of the HandKey II readers is a complete door controller that provides door lock operation, request for exit and alarm monitoring. All information, including biometric data and decision-making capability, resides locally to ensure that the doors are secure and will continue to operate properly even if all communications to the main access control computer are lost. They are wired into the building's security network, and the system is easy to access remotely. Administrators can do everything from a laptop, controlling the doors and monitoring activity. Audit trail data provides empirical data and information needed to investigate problems that may occur within the secure areas.



## Results

Network Analyst Erich D. Flynn, with the college's IT department, says the hand geometry readers offer the protection of dual credentials, using both the biometric hand characteristics and a PIN number. "It combines something you know and something you are," he explains. "With our one-card system it's only something you have, so the dual credential really protects these areas."

Martin credits the support GRCC has received from Ingersoll Rand Security Technologies for the smooth transition to the new system.

"Their IT team was very strong, and they worked with our IT technicians to provide the support we needed. Martin adds that they now are discussing the possibilities of applying the readers to other sensitive areas such as laboratories and chemical storage areas.



### Grand Rapids Community College

With a tradition of excellence that spans nearly a century, Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) encompasses eight city blocks at its main downtown campus. In addition, the college operates an off-campus Learning Corner that serves the East Hills and Eastown neighborhoods and two Michigan Technical Education Centers (M-TECs®) in West Michigan.



Founded in 1914 as Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC), the college has built a strong reputation for academic excellence and is considered a premier transfer institution, nationally recognized for both its liberal arts and occupational programs. The college's diverse student body, which numbers more than 14,000 students enrolled in more than 1,600 liberal arts and occupational courses, represents students from Kent and surrounding counties as well as students from across the U.S. and 22 other nations. Another 10,000 learners are served by non-credit instructional opportunities.

