

Wilfrid Laurier University uses Pitney Bowes Smart Lockers to unlock staff efficiency and student satisfaction.

Client profile

Wilfrid Laurier University

wlu.ca

- Public university with campuses in Waterloo, Brantford, Kitchener and Milton, Ontario, Canada
- Self-described as a “multi-campus, multi-community university”
- Known for its business school and scientific research



Overview

Wilfrid Laurier University typically focuses on its core competency of educating students. However, efficiency improvements proved elusive for the Distribution Services team. To improve staff productivity, as well as convenience of package pickups for residence students, Wilfrid Laurier University rolled out a bank of Pitney Bowes ParcelPoint™ Smart Lockers. The lockers automated much of the manual work from the university’s prior parcel delivery process, freeing up staff to provide higher-value services. Residence students can now pick up packages during campus operating hours from a central location at a time that is more convenient for them.

Business challenge

Wilfrid Laurier University provides high-quality higher education across campuses in four Ontario cities: Waterloo, Brantford, Kitchener and Milton. The residence students at the Waterloo campus receive about 2,000 parcels per month, including care packages and online orders. The Distribution Services team formerly used an inconsistent process that led to inefficiencies in parcel delivery.

“We would receive a package and create a tracking label in Pitney Bowes SendSuite® Tracking,” explains Tara Velanoff, Manager of Mail and Distribution Services. “We would then look up the recipient’s contact information and send an email to let them know their package was ready for pickup. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to ask them to schedule a time to pick it up in person, as building access was limited.”

“We have happy staff and happy students. We would install Pitney Bowes Smart Lockers in every building if we could. They are paving the way for the future of parcel pickup at Wilfrid Laurier University.”

— Tara Velanoff, Manager, Mail and Distribution Services, Wilfrid Laurier University

The process was labour-intensive for staff and inconvenient for students. “Pickups were available from 8am to 4pm Monday through Friday, and Distribution Services is located in a building that is remote from the center of campus,” Velanoff says.

Technology used

- ParcelPoint™ Smart Lockers
- SendSuite® Tracking Online

"We were also able to step up early in the pandemic. Distribution Services took responsibility for distributing PPE and COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits. The efficiencies of the smart lockers have allowed us to reallocate staff resources."

— Julie Andrews, Receiver, Mail and Distribution Services, Wilfrid Laurier University

"A student might have to walk 15 or 20 minutes in each direction, potentially making it difficult to retrieve packages quickly." During the pandemic, faculty and staff were at times inconvenienced when "they couldn't find a time slot to pick up their own packages because we were fully booked with student pickups."

Solution

The Distribution Services team needed a delivery process through which residence students could receive parcels outside of the departments operating hours. That's when they discovered Pitney Bowes ParcelPoint™ Smart Lockers. With the assistance of its Pitney Bowes Account Manager, Kenneth Singh, the university installed a bank of lockers in a central location on the Waterloo campus and ran a pilot with a small group of students.

"Their responses were 100 percent positive," says Julie Andrews, Receiver in the Mail and Distribution Services department. As a result, the university expanded the locker services to all residence students on campus.

Now, when a parcel arrives at the distribution center, a staff member scans it and SendSuite Tracking assigns it to a locker. Distribution Services staff deliver parcels to the lockers a few times a day. "Once a package is in and the locker door is closed, the system generates an automated email to the student," Andrews says. "They get a notification with a QR code. When they arrive at the locker bank, they scan the QR code from their phone or enter a code manually, and the locker pops open.

"The software is very intuitive, like an ATM," she adds. "Students find the system simple to use."

Benefits

For Distribution Services staff, the lockers reduced the manual work related to package notifications and delivery. This has enabled the team to take on additional work. For one thing, an internal staff member replaced the courier service that was moving packages between campuses on a daily basis. This change is saving the university CAD\$25,000-30,000 every year.

"We were also able to step up early in the pandemic," Andrews says. "Distribution Services took responsibility for distributing PPE [personal protective equipment] and COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits. The efficiencies of the smart lockers have allowed us to reallocate staff resources," Velanoff says.

Students are also happy. "In a survey, 94 percent of students reported that their experience with the lockers has been extremely positive," Velanoff says. "The main feedback was that we need more lockers." In fact, the university has already installed 30 lockers in Brantford and is adding 29 more in Waterloo, for a total of 61 on that campus.

"We have happy staff and happy students," Velanoff says. "We would install Pitney Bowes Smart Lockers in every building if we could. They are paving the way for the future of parcel pickup at Wilfrid Laurier University."



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