

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse



Industry

Higher Education

Location

La Crosse, Wisconsin, United States

Products

AutoVu Managed Services

Partners

PCS Mobile, T2 Systems

How a university increased yearly revenue while writing fewer parking tickets

The University of Wisconsin–La Crosse (UWL) is a leading comprehensive four-year institution located in La Crosse, Wisconsin, United States. Established in 1909, UWL caters to over 10,000 students and employs over 500 academic staff. The university knows that providing excellent customer service helps them rank among the top schools in the State. It's why the parking services team at UWL always seeks to improve parking across the five-level garage and 18 lots. Total, they manage over 2800 spaces and over 3700 permits.

The Challenge

Like many universities, UWL used to distribute parking permits to students and staff. While the university tried decals and printed hangtags, both options led to familiar problems. For example, the decals would not always stick to windshields. Furthermore, a one-permit-per-vehicle rule resulted in unnecessary tickets after students or staff would forget to move the permit to a secondary vehicle. Sometimes, those permits would end up in the wrong hands, either shared between students, or worse, fraudulently sold. For parking staff, printing, issuing, and checking permits on foot was costly and time-consuming.

The Solution

By moving to a play-by-plate solution, the parking team felt confident that they could improve their level of service. With the help of their trusted advisors at PCS Mobile, they selected AutoVu™ Managed Services, a cloud-based offering that simplifies installation and maintenance. Since deploying the AutoVu ALPR system, UWL has written 150 fewer citations, issued 200 more permits, and increased revenue by 10% year-over-year. With ALPR data, the team continues to maximize parking lots and enhance service. For students and staff, there's much relief knowing: 'Your plate is your permit.'

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UWL amps up parking services using data from AutoVu Managed Services

Universities are always looking for ways to help staff become more efficient. That’s why UWL chose AutoVu Managed Services (AMS), the cloud-hosted parking enforcement service from Genetec Inc. AMS offered the University a powerful and reliable ALPR system, without the hassle and costs of procuring servers, managing updates or handling fixes.

According to Victor A. Hill, MPA, CAPP, Director of Parking and Transportation Services, “It’s just easier to pay the experts to take care of everything rather than getting our teams involved. We know that Genetec will protect the data, so it’s a time-saver for our university.”

The parking team enforces all commuter and resident lots using one vehicle equipped with the AutoVu system and two AutoVu SharpX cameras. Rain, snow, or shine, the ALPR system provides an average accuracy rate of 95% on license plate reads.

Cutting costs and fraud with AMS

Without physical permits, UWL has saved up to \$30,000 in labor and material. Customers can buy permits online using their license plates. Visitors or occasional commuters use Digital Luke® II pay stations or a mobile app to purchase parking time. Since the ALPR system receives permit updates in real-time, there’s little room for ticketing errors and fraud.

According to Hill, “We always knew we had a secondary market where students would sell permits, we just didn’t know how extensive it was. Last year, we issued over 60 citations for fraud which accounted for about 25% of our citation revenue gain.”

Increasing lot usage by 10-25%

Parking enforcement aside, ALPR data is helping the parking team make noticeable service improvements. According to Hill, “The biggest thing we have been able to do is to sell more permits.” In most lots, they have increased usage by 10-25%, allowing for more permitted and visitor parking. Event parking is also up 20% in revenues because the team knows that they have space.

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Some of those new options include giving departments coupon codes for guest speakers and visitors. Depending on the availability in each lot, many coupons can be issued at once and all parking is billed to the department. With more revenue coming in and fewer tickets being issued, UWL is passing the perks onto customers.

“We’re reinvesting our revenues into our operations, and with that, we’ve been able to reduce our annual permit rates,” explained Hill.

Driving into even better university parking

Looking ahead, the UWL team is asking: ‘how can we make the customer experience even better?’ The goal is to allow people to make better decisions about parking and to reduce cruising time on campus. For that, the team is looking at fixed ALPR cameras. They want to integrate the system with apps or signage to tell customer which lots have space before they leave home.

“It’s really nice to be in a position where we can be talking about service enhancements without increasing prices. Thanks to the AutoVu system, we have better access to data. That helps us manage our lots more efficiently and helps us provide better service to customers. It’s win-win,” concluded Hill.

