

Report to President Sean Decatur Residence Hall Card Access Work Group April, 2017

We are pleased to submit the following report based on our research, deliberations, and conversations with the Kenyon community over the course of the 2016-17 year.

Introduction, Charge and Members

At the end of the 2015-16 academic year, students, faculty and parents raised safety concerns with the current level of card access at Kenyon. In response, the Housing and Residential Life Office initiated conversations on this topic during Summer 2016 with students and other campus community members. Community meetings were held on July 6 and 19. Twenty students attended each meeting, as well as Deputy Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator Linda Smolak and/or Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator Samantha Hughes, Campus Safety Supervisor Todd Bell, and Director of Housing & Residential Life/Assistant Dean of Students Jill Engel-Hellman.

Community members who attended the summer meetings acknowledged that students should feel safe in their living spaces, and that students do not need access to residence halls other than their own. In addition, students stated that restricting access could reduce incidents of vandalism and “random drunk people” in buildings, especially Old Kenyon. However, students also expressed wanting access to residential spaces in case they got too cold, or did not feel safe while walking from one destination to another. Further, students voiced concerns that if card access was restricted, students would just prop doors or hold doors open.

From these conversations, a work group was formed in August 2016 to assess Kenyon’s current card access system and determine what changes, if any, should be made. This work group met monthly during the fall 2016 semester, and once in April 2017.

Members of this work group were:

- Carisa Lanning, LBIS
- Steve Martin, LBIS
- Carter Schoenfeld, LBIS
- Niranjan Davray, LBIS
- Mark Kohlman,* Chief Business Officer
- Fred Linger,* Business Services
- Carol Duvall, Business Services
- Bob Hooper, Campus Safety
- Steve Arnett,* Facility Operations
- Jill Engel-Hellman,*Residential Life
- Lisa Train, Residential Life
- Meredith Bonham,* Vice President for Student Affairs
- Liz Eder, ‘17 (Chair, Student Council Housing and Dining Committee)
- Sam Clougher, ‘17 (Senior Class President; Summer Community Meetings Participant)
- Morgan Harden, ‘17 (Summer Community Meetings Participant)

**Member of Kenyon’s Emergency Preparedness Team (KEPT)*

The work group carefully reviewed the following information: campus safety concerns; notes from the summer community meetings; feedback from the September 25 Student Council Meeting; feedback from Student Council and Housing and Dining Committee (on-going); feedback from individual students

(on-going); door prop alarm and card reader survey; laundry and dual-use facility assessment; card access system and patron group assessment; and financial feasibility of implementing potential changes.

Card access information collected from Hope, Kalamazoo, Denison, Wooster, Hamilton, St. Olaf, Carleton, Ohio Wesleyan, and Heidelberg, as well as fifteen other Ohio colleges and universities, showed that all but two restricted card access to only residents who lived in residence halls, some – if not all – of the time. Students at Kalamazoo and Wooster have 24/7 access to all residential spaces; however, administrators at both said they would like to further limit access. Carleton and Ohio Wesleyan restrict access to their smaller living areas (apartments, houses) to only residents, while Hope, Denison, Hamilton, St. Olaf and Heidelberg restrict access in all buildings to only residents for a designated time every day. Many schools cited the difficulty in managing dual-use facilities (dining or other community resources in residential spaces) as to why access was not more restrictive.

Pilot Program Overview

After a thorough assessment of Kenyon's current card access system, a pilot card access program was proposed and implemented for Spring 2017. The pilot program involved two different types of restricted card access. In McBride Residence Hall, only residents had card access from 10:00 pm to 8:00 am. In Watson Residence Hall, only residents had access. Students who did not reside in McBride and Watson were still able to visit, but had to be hosted by a resident of that building (in the case of McBride, during restricted hours).

The working group collected and reviewed feedback from a number of different sources to assess the pilot card access program in April 2017. Advisors to the Sexual Misconduct Advisors (SMAs), Discrimination Advisors (DAs), and Peer Counselors (PCs) did not report any issues with these groups accessing McBride or Watson to assist students. The Counseling Center reported not hearing anything from students about this change, and Campus Safety only had one request from a campus organization to access McBride (which was denied). Four students working with the Title IX Office shared that they did not think students should have access to residence halls other than where they live.

Maintenance records showed a decrease in the cost of vandalism in McBride for Spring 2017 as compared to Spring 2016 (as of mid-April). Specifically, there was \$180 of vandalism during Spring 2016 and \$0 of vandalism during Spring 2017. However, the work group felt that the sample was too small, and the length of the comparison too short, to attribute these decreases to the change in card access.

While some students expressed concern with the changes after they were announced Fall 2016, virtually nothing was heard – good or bad – from actual residents in McBride or Watson, as well as other community members. In April, Liz Eder '17 (Chair of the Student Council Housing and Dining Committee) sent several messages to allstu announcing the time, date and location of two feedback sessions. The five students who attended across the two sessions described restricted access as a “nuisance,” “hassle,” and/or an “extra barrier” to have to let friends into their residence hall. They commented that they feel unsafe when they forget their K-Card and/or their cell phone is dead and a friend cannot just swipe them in.

Work Group Recommendations

Acknowledging that the current card access system does not provide a level of safety we desire at Kenyon, the work group explored two different card access models that mirror the Spring 2017 Pilot Program:

1. Limiting access to only the residents of each residence hall, 10:00pm-8:00am (McBride)
2. Limiting access to only the residents of each residence hall, all of the time (Watson)

After reviewing all of the information noted above, the work group recommends option #2: card access be limited to only the residents of each residence hall, beginning Fall 2017. While the work group recognized that any change to the current system would be met with resistance by some number of students, we felt strongly that student and community safety is paramount and, as such, the second option is more in line with this overall philosophy.

There are additional, more specific reasons for limiting access to residents all of the time. Fewer students with access to residential spaces would mean less opportunity for crimes/incidents (especially vandalism) to occur. Currently, academic buildings have more restrictive access than the residence halls, where students sleep and shower. In addition, the perpetrators of most campus crimes/incidents are members of our own community, making it more likely that a member of the Kenyon community will pose a threat or commit a crime than a stranger. Also, Kenyon has a responsibility to use the door access technology available and prevent crimes/incidents; not using the technology to its fullest also increases the College's liability should an incident occur. Lastly, the proposed model prepares students for life outside of Kenyon, not only post-graduation, but during summers and when participating in Study Away, where students do not have access to living spaces other than their own.

Given the dual-use facilities of some of our residence halls (i.e. shared laundry and community lounges), the work group further recommended that the following changes: first, the lounge and laundry spaces in the basement of Old Kenyon should be separated from the residential spaces using card readers, so that students can continue to have access to the basement of Old Kenyon, at all times; second, the shared laundry spaces in Gund and Manning should also be separated from the residential spaces in these buildings using card readers, so that students living in other buildings can access these laundry facilities; third, student groups who reserve lounge spaces in Leonard and Hanna using Kenyon Reservations should be able to request access to these spaces; fourth, to ensure that doors are closed, new door prop alarms should be installed on all residence hall exterior doors and doors with card readers; finally, CAs should continue to have access to all residence halls at all times, in order to fulfill their roles, and Campus Safety will continue to provide DAs, SMAs, and PCs with building access, as needed.