Biometric Hand Scanning

The Management team of University Recreation and Wellness made a decision to add biometric hand scanning (commonly known as a hand key) as an option to the UCard system after extensive research and investigation with other institutions that are using them, the Office of the General Counsel and the companies that produce the biometric access systems. The process is non-invasive, easy to use, provides quick access and another means of access in addition to scanning the UCard. The additional method of entry has allowed members who forget their ID to enter, allowed runners to leave the facility without having to carry an ID with them, improved our ability to protect the student’s investment, eliminated pass lists and moved people through the facilities efficiently and independently. On average, 92.8% of our members have chosen to use the biometric hand scanner over the card swipe.

There are many colleges and university utilizing the hand scanners as a method of access that we consulted prior to selecting this option. Following are about 1/3 of the institutions that are currently using the hand scanner:

- University of Georgia
- University of Florida
- University of Oregon
- University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
- University of California – Merced
- University of South Carolina
- George Mason University
- MIT
- San Diego State University

There are currently two desk areas where we can scan ID cards located on the north and south sides of the turnstiles. With the high interest in biometrics, we chose to turn our north desk into an enrollment site during the first week of school. Members will continue to have the option of either scanning their U Card or using the hand scanner.

To clarify, the hand scanner that we use is also termed a “hand key” and acts similar to a key. It is non-invasive and does not take finger prints or vein scans. It is actually a measurement of the size and shape of your hand (it has been described as taking a “shadow” of your hand.) The data is only stored on a local server at our recreation facilities and is translated into grid points. Upon entry into the facility, the hand scan is linked with your ID number and then verified as an active or inactive membership within our software program. The University’s General Counsel has advised us that the biometric scanner and Ucard data have the same Data Privacy Act protection under the law as all the private data at the University. This also applies to one's checking accounts and other forms of personal data.

Information sheets are available at the member service desk and have some of the following information:

- **Enhanced Service Option**: Provides an option for those who do not have their card, i.e.: members who want to run outside, etc.
• **Improved Technology**: Utilizes field proven hand geometry technology that maps and verifies the size and shape of a person’s hand, including length, width, thickness and surface area, to verify the person’s identity and match it with their membership.

• **Consistent, accurate** results are ensured because the Hand Key adapts its biometric template for an individual user over time. This means that the Hand Key “learns” to change as the user changes.

• **Convenient and easy to use**: The user simply places his or her hand on the plate and then enters the student/employee ID number on the keypad to gain entry. Verification takes about one second.

• **Enhances the student experience** with Easy-to-use terminals which have high user acceptance because no hand, palm or fingerprints are taken or stored and no card is needed for use.

• **Increases level of security in the facility** – protecting the student investment. Self-monitoring system minimizes people’s ability to transfer IDs.

• The Biometric hand scanner has *simplified verification and access control reducing lines*, and streamlined access management processes for universities of all sizes and across the country.

• The hand scanner has an anti-microbial coating on the device which inhibits the growth of bacteria and lasts the life of the Hand Key.

Regarding student jobs, we are the largest student employer on campus by far. Before opening the expansion, we employed on average 600 students annually. With the expansion, we created about another 300 student jobs. The addition of the scanners allowed us to provide an effective, efficient, independent access system for students who just need to get in the facilities and prefer not to wait in line. Those members who need to stop at the desk to resolve issues can now do so with more responsive service to their needs. The UMPD has inquired about the process and is interested in possibly having them installed elsewhere on campus.

Regarding the cost of the scanners, each one costs about $2,500 or $10,000 for the four of them. Please keep in mind this is a long-term investment and a much more efficient way of moving our members into the facility. If we hired four additional students to replace the scanners, at a cost of $8/hour x 106 hours/week on average that we are open, it would cost $3,392/week or $13,568/month to staff the check-in. We feel this is a more cost effective way to utilize the student fees and provide better service.

Regarding protecting the student investment by not allowing unauthorized people to enter the facilities, that is exactly why we have controlled access. We confiscate cards that do not belong to people on a weekly basis. The students have paid for these facilities and we want to protect their investment to the best of our ability by only allowing those individuals that belong in the facility to have access.