



## White Paper | Campus Housing

**Securing On and Off-Campus College and University Housing: Making Student Living Safer with Solutions from MCA**

### Overview of the Increasing Safety Concerns in Student Housing

In recent years, safety concerns in student housing have been on the rise (just like in broader campus security). Reports show a worrying increase in violent crimes, sexual assaults, burglaries, and auto thefts at American colleges and their surrounding student housing facilities. While some of this is due to the unusual circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, there's a longer trend of rising campus-related crimes over the past decade. This paper will dig into these issues and look at the challenges faced by the student housing operations.

### The Importance of Creating Secure Environments for Students

Making sure students have secure and safe places to live is super important. Students, parents, and educational institutions know that safety is a key part of the college experience. When students feel safe, they can focus on their studies and enjoy campus life. But if they're worried about safety, it can hurt their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. Schools must put strong safety and security measures in place to help students feel secure and support a positive learning environment.

### Purpose and Scope of the White Paper

This white paper aims to give a full picture of the current state of student housing safety, point out the challenges schools face in keeping these areas secure, and present advanced technology solutions that can boost safety and security. We'll cover aspects like intelligent video surveillance, access control systems, emergency communication systems, and In-Building wireless solutions. By exploring these, we hope to give practical advice to college administrators and security professionals on creating safer student housing. The focus is on the unique needs and challenges of student housing while also considering the broader campus safety context.



### Enhancing Student Safety Throughout College Campus Housing Complexes

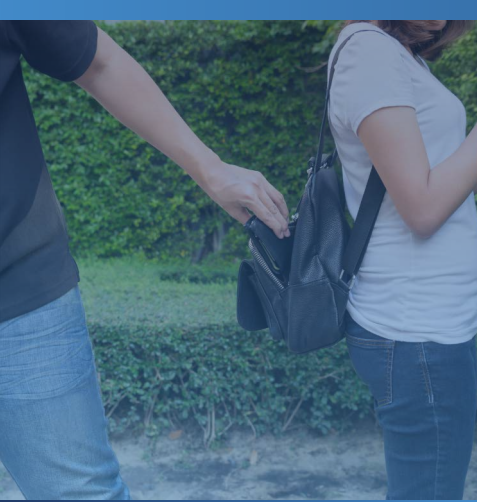
Paper Overview and Purpose Statement

The Current State of Student Housing Safety

Challenges in Security Student Housing

Technology Solutions for Housing Safety

MCA's Role in Enhancing Housing Security



Campus crimes, including violent crimes, sexual assaults, and auto thefts, surged by 44% from 2020-2022, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced student security.



Over 82% of students are concerned about safety, especially when walking at night, being in unfamiliar areas, and the rising threat of violent crimes.



## The Current State of Student Housing Safety

### Analysis of Recent Trends in Campus Crimes and Emergencies

Lately, there's been a big rise in various types of crimes on college campuses and in their nearby student housing areas. Reports indicate increases in violent crimes, sexual assaults, burglaries, and auto thefts, causing worry among students. For example, the number of reported criminal offenses on college campuses rose by 44% from 2020 to 2022, hitting the highest levels in the past decade. Auto thefts on college campuses more than doubled in the same period, marking a ten-year high. These numbers show the urgent need for better security measures and proactive strategies to protect students.

### Statistical Data to Provide a Comprehensive View

Looking at crime data over the past decade reveals some scary trends. In 2023, over 50% of mass shootings happened in a school setting, including college campuses. Also, the number of gun-related arrests on college campuses went up by 19% from 2020 to 2022, totaling 2,252 incidents. Plus, over 38,000 reported crimes at colleges and universities were recorded in 2022, compared to 21,200 incidents in 2020. These stats show the pressing need for better safety and security measures in student housing.

### Impact of COVID-19 on Crime Statistics and the Resurgence of Student Riots and Protests

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected crime statistics on college campuses. During lockdowns, many campuses saw a temporary drop in some crimes due to fewer people being around. But as students came back, there was a noticeable rise in criminal activities. Also, the pandemic sparked social and political unrest, leading to more student riots and protests. For instance, in the last two weeks of April 2024 alone, over 2,000 student protestors were arrested on college campuses. These events often turn violent, making the security situation even more complex in student housing.

### Everyday Concerns

Fire safety is a major worry in student housing. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, about 3,800 university housing fires happen each year in the U.S., with 88% related to cooking. These fires cause property damage and pose serious risks to students' lives. Using advanced fire detection and suppression systems, along with regular safety drills, is crucial to reduce these risks.

### Student Perceptions and Concerns

Recent surveys show that students are very worried about their safety on campus. Over 82% of college students said they were concerned about their personal safety, with specific fears about walking home in the dark, being in unfamiliar areas, and dealing with strangers. These worries are made worse by the rising number of violent crimes and the ongoing threat of gun violence.

### How These Concerns Affect Students' Mental Health and Academic Performance

Safety worries directly impact students' mental health and academic performance. Constant anxiety about personal safety can lead to stress, depression, and a general sense of insecurity. This affects students' ability to focus on their studies and fully participate in campus life. Creating a safe environment is key to fostering a positive educational experience and supporting students' overall well-being.

## The Disconnect Between the University's Goals and Students' Perceptions of Safety

Despite universities' efforts to make campuses safe and welcoming, there's often a gap between what the institutions aim for and what students feel. Even with various security measures in place, students might still feel vulnerable if these measures aren't visible or well-communicated. Closing this gap requires clear communication, involving students in safety initiatives, and constantly assessing and addressing their concerns to build trust and ensure a secure campus.

## Challenges in Securing Student Housing

### Diverse and Dispersed Nature of Student Housing

Securing student housing is tough because these facilities are so varied and spread out. On-campus dorms are usually within campus boundaries, making them easier to monitor and secure. But off-campus apartments are scattered across larger areas, often mixed with private homes and businesses. This makes it hard to implement uniform security measures and ensure consistent safety standards across all student housing.

### The Complexity of Managing Security Across Various Facilities

Managing security across different housing facilities means dealing with various architectural layouts, access points, and occupancy patterns. Each facility has its own security needs that require specific solutions. For instance, older buildings might need significant updates to support modern security technologies, while newer ones might already have some integrated systems. Coordinating security measures across these varied environments takes careful planning and resource allocation to ensure all students are equally protected.

### Balancing Open Campus Culture with Stringent Security Measures

Universities want to keep an open and welcoming campus culture that encourages freedom and inclusivity. But putting in strict security measures can sometimes clash with this goal, making students feel watched or restricted. Finding a balance between maintaining an open campus and ensuring strong security is crucial. This can be done by using discrete yet effective security technologies that boost safety without harming the campus atmosphere. Engaging students in safety planning and clearly explaining the reasons behind security measures can also help gain their cooperation and foster a shared sense of responsibility for campus safety.

## Technology Solutions for Enhanced Safety and Security

### Comprehensive Security Systems

#### Intelligent Video Surveillance with Analytics

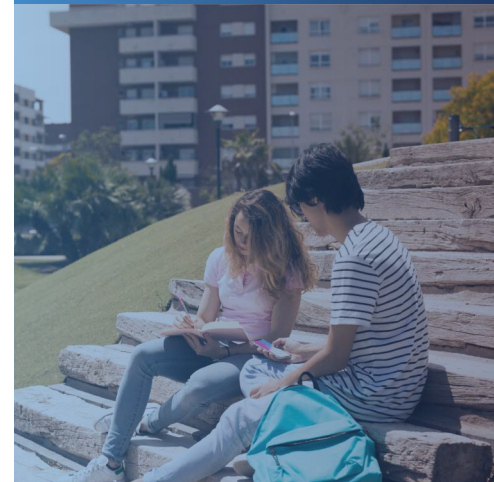
Placing cameras outside dorm doors, inside hallways, and in parking lots ensures full coverage of key areas. These cameras monitor entrances and exits, track movements within buildings, and oversee parking areas, reducing the risk of unauthorized access and criminal activities. Intelligent video surveillance systems with advanced analytics can spot loitering, unusual activities, and recognize license plates (ALPR systems). By analyzing real-time video feeds, they alert security personnel immediately, enabling quick responses to potential threats.

#### Access Control Systems for Dorms and Apartments

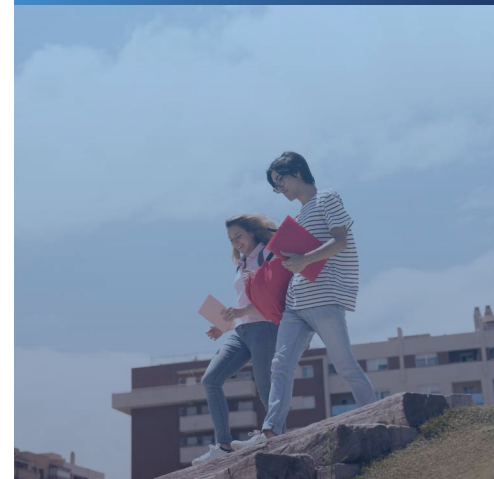
Access control systems are crucial for managing entry into dorms and apartments. These systems use keycards, biometrics, or PIN codes to allow only authorized individuals into specific areas, boosting security and preventing unauthorized access. Smart parking gates with ALPR readers, RFID tags, or temporary barcode scanners ensure only registered vehicles can access parking areas, enhancing security and streamlining the parking process for students and staff.

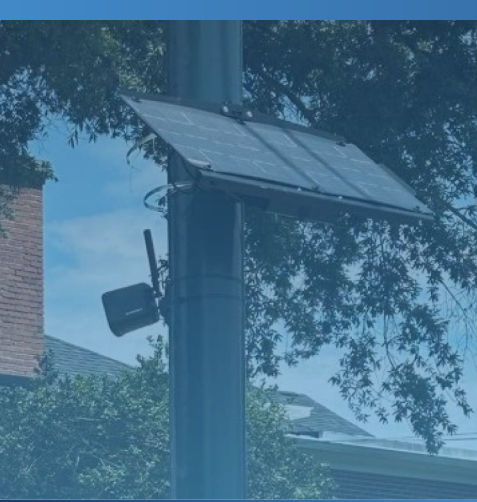


Student housing varies widely, with on-campus dorms easier to secure, while off-campus apartments are dispersed, complicating uniform security measures



Cameras at door entrances and within hallways and parking lots boost security. Advanced systems detect unusual activities and license plates, enabling quick responses.





In-Building Wireless ERCES and Cellular DAS enhance communication for emergency responders in buildings, ensuring reliable connectivity in critical areas.



Rugged and Reliable MotoTRBO and APX radios ensure secure, clear connections across campus, integrating with public safety networks and local law enforcement.



## Detection Systems

Smart sensors in hallways, shared bathrooms, and dorm rooms can detect vapor, smoke, and unusual sounds that might indicate distress, like shouting or fighting. These sensors provide early warnings of potential hazards or incidents, allowing for quick intervention. Advanced weapon detection systems use audio, visual, and physical sensors to identify hidden weapons, alerting security personnel to potential threats before they escalate.

## In-Building Wireless Solutions

Public Safety Emergency Responder Communication Enhancement Systems (ERCES) improve communication for emergency responders within buildings, ensuring they can keep clear and reliable communication even in areas with weak signals. Cellular Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS) are vital for maintaining reliable cellular communication in large buildings, supporting emergency responders' efforts and ensuring consistent communication during emergencies.

## Emergency Communication Systems

Mass notification systems are essential for sending out alerts and warnings during emergencies. These systems can broadcast messages via text, email, public address systems, and digital signage, providing timely and accurate information to keep everyone on campus aware of potential threats and what to do. Integrating emergency communication systems with mobile apps allows real-time alerts and updates to be sent directly to students' phones, boosting overall campus safety and security.

## Two-Way Radios and Radio Systems

Reliable communication is crucial for effective coordination between campus police, security teams, and dispatch centers. Our two-way radio solutions, including MotoTRBO and APX radios, ensure clear and secure communication across all campus areas. These advanced radio systems can connect with public safety networks, allowing seamless communication with local law enforcement and emergency responders during critical incidents. For smaller campuses with private security, MotoTRBO radios provide a cost-effective and reliable communication solution, keeping security personnel connected and ready to respond quickly to incidents.

## Implementing Security Solutions in Student Housing

### Steps to Assess Current Security Infrastructure

To effectively implement security solutions in student housing, start with a thorough assessment of the current security setup. This involves several key steps:

- **Conducting Security Audits:** Regularly inspect all security systems (like surveillance cameras, access control mechanisms, and alarm systems) to identify any weaknesses and areas for improvement.
- **Evaluating Security Policies and Procedures:** Review your current security protocols and emergency response plans to make sure they align with best practices and address all potential threats.
- **Engaging Stakeholders:** Collaborate with students, faculty, campus security, and local law enforcement to get insights into security concerns and gather suggestions for improvements.
- **Technology Assessment:** Assess the functionality and coverage of existing technology solutions (like video surveillance and access controls) to see if they meet the campus's needs.

### Planning and Budgeting for New Technology Investments

Investing in new technology requires careful planning and budgeting. Here's a guide to help identify any weaknesses and areas for improvement.

- **Identifying Needs:** Based on your security assessment, pinpoint the specific technology solutions needed to address vulnerabilities and enhance safety. This might include upgrading surveillance systems, implementing advanced access controls, or integrating emergency communication systems.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to compare the expenses of implementing new technologies against the potential benefits, such as improved safety, reduced crime rates, and increased student satisfaction.
- **Securing Funding:** Explore various funding options, including university budgets, grants, and partnerships with technology providers, to finance the necessary security upgrades.
- **Creating a Deployment Plan:** Develop a detailed plan for deploying new technologies, including timelines, milestones, and responsibilities, to ensure a smooth and efficient implementation process.

## System Monitoring and Maintenance (MCA's SecurePlan Offering)

- **Proactive Maintenance:** Implement SecurePlan, a comprehensive maintenance program from MCA that ensures all security devices and systems are regularly inspected, serviced, and updated to maintain optimal performance.
- **24/7 Technical Support:** Provide around-the-clock technical support to address any issues that arise with the security systems, minimizing downtime and ensuring continuous protection.
- **System Upgrades:** Regularly upgrade the security systems to incorporate the latest advancements in technology, ensuring the campus remains at the forefront of safety and security.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Continuously monitor the performance of security systems to identify any potential problems early and take corrective action before they impact campus safety.

By following these steps, universities can ensure that their security infrastructure is robust, up-to-date, and capable of providing a safe and secure environment for students living in campus housing.

## Enhancing Student Satisfaction and Engagement

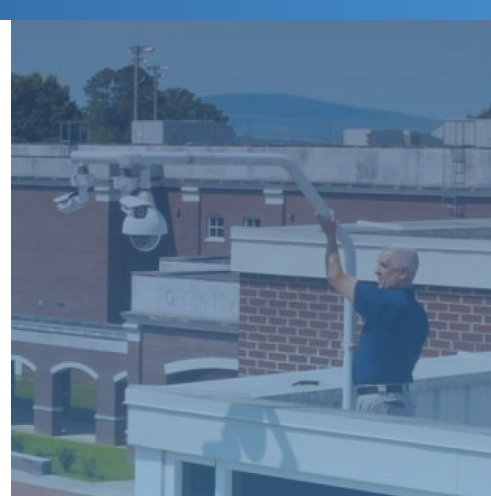
### Building Trust Through Transparent Communication About Safety Measures

Building trust among students is key to fostering a secure and engaged campus community. Transparent communication about safety measures plays a crucial role in this process:

- **Regular Updates:** Provide students with regular updates on the security measures being implemented on campus. This includes informing them about new technologies, policy changes, and improvements in safety protocols.
- **Open Forums:** Hold open forums and town hall meetings where students can voice their concerns, ask questions, and receive direct responses from campus security officials and administrators. This approach demonstrates a commitment to transparency and responsiveness.
- **Clear Reporting Channels:** Establish clear and accessible channels for reporting safety concerns and incidents. Ensure that students know how to report issues and what to expect in terms of follow-up and resolution.
- **Publicizing Success Stories:** Share success stories and case studies where security measures have effectively prevented incidents or improved safety. Highlighting these positive outcomes can build confidence in the security infrastructure and its effectiveness.

### Encouraging Student Involvement in Safety Initiatives

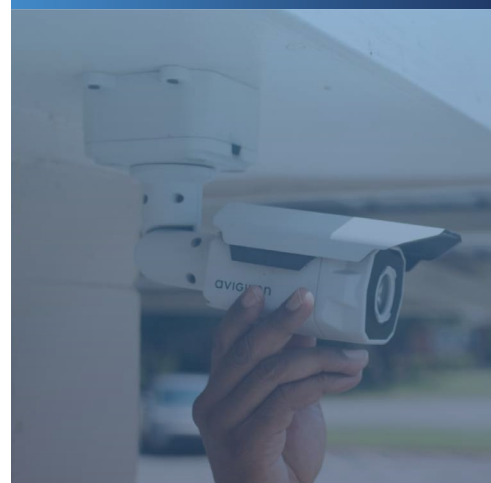
Active student involvement in safety initiatives can significantly enhance the overall security environment and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility:

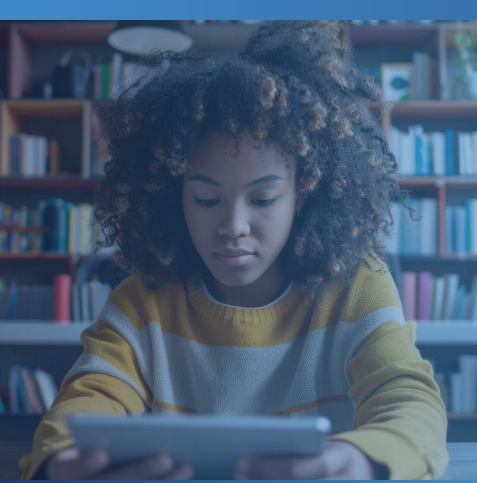


Identifying your campus and housing security needs and obtaining the funding required to acquire them is key to the safety planning process.



Keep students informed with regular updates on campus security measures, including new technologies, policy changes, and safety protocol improvements.

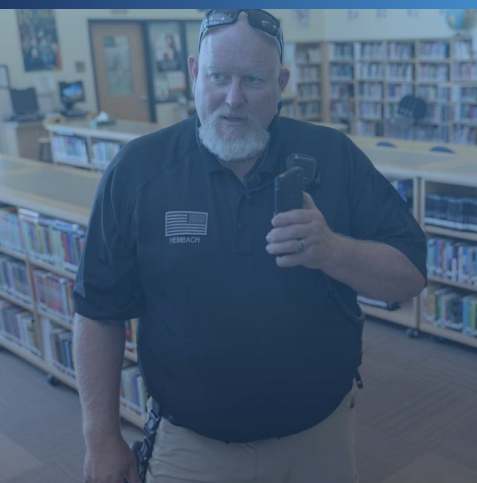




Engaging students in safety initiatives boosts campus security and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility.



MCA is committed to student safety. With decades of experience we provide tailored security solutions, addressing the unique challenges of colleges and universities.



- **Safety Committees:** Create student safety committees that collaborate with campus security and administration to develop and review safety policies and initiatives. Involving students in decision-making processes ensures their concerns and perspectives are considered.
- **Volunteer Programs:** Develop volunteer programs that allow students to participate in safety patrols, peer education, and awareness campaigns. These programs can help students feel more connected to the campus community and more invested in its safety.
- **Safety Training Workshops:** Offer workshops and training sessions on personal safety, emergency response, and crime prevention. Providing students with practical skills and knowledge empowers them to take proactive steps to protect themselves and others.
- **Incentive Programs:** Introduce incentive programs that reward students for their involvement in safety initiatives. Recognizing and celebrating their contributions can motivate more students to participate.

## Utilizing Technology For a More Connected and Secure Student Community

Leveraging technology can greatly enhance communication, connectivity, and security within the student community:

- **Mobile Apps:** Develop and promote mobile apps that provide students with easy access to safety resources, emergency contact information, and real-time alerts. These apps can also facilitate communication between students and campus security.
- **Social Media Integration:** Use social media platforms to disseminate safety information, share updates, and engage with students. Social media can be an effective tool for reaching a broad audience quickly and efficiently.
- **Digital Signage:** Install digital signage across campus to display important safety messages, real-time alerts, and instructions during emergencies. These signs can serve as a constant reminder of the campus's commitment to safety.
- **Online Communities:** Create online communities and forums where students can discuss safety issues, share tips, and support each other. These platforms can foster a sense of solidarity and collective responsibility for campus safety.

By implementing these strategies, universities can enhance student satisfaction and engagement and create a safer and more connected campus community.

## The Role of MCA in Enhancing Student Housing Security

At MCA, we are dedicated to creating safe and secure environments for students. With decades of experience in the education sector, we have established ourselves as a trusted partner for educational institutions across the nation. Our expertise extends to understanding the unique security challenges faced by colleges and universities, particularly in student housing environments. We take pride in our ability to deliver tailored solutions that address these challenges effectively, ensuring the safety and well-being of students, staff, and faculty.

### Specific Solutions and Technologies Offered by MCA

MCA offers a comprehensive suite of voice, data, and security solutions designed to enhance the safety and security of student housing facilities. Our innovative technologies are tailored to meet the specific needs of educational institutions, providing robust protection and peace of mind.

Voice Solutions:

- **Two-Way Radios and Radio Systems:** We provide reliable and robust communication tools, including MotoTRBO and APX radios, essential for campus security teams. These systems ensure seamless communication between dispatch centers, field teams, and emergency responders.

- **Dispatch Solutions:** Our advanced dispatch systems integrate real-time data and intuitive interfaces, enhancing coordination and efficiency in responding to incidents.

#### Data Solutions:

- **In-Building Wireless Solutions:** We offer Public Safety Emergency Responder Communication Enhancement Systems (ERCES) and Cellular Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS) to ensure reliable 911 communication and support for responder coordination.
- **Mass Notification Solutions:** We provide mass notification systems including sirens, speakers, signage, and more for alerts and warnings that can integrate with mobile apps for student alerts, ensuring timely communication during emergencies.

#### Security Solutions:

- **Intelligent Video Surveillance with Analytics:** Our video surveillance systems are equipped with advanced analytics for loitering detection, unusual activity detection, and ALPR systems. Cameras are strategically positioned outside doors, inside hallways, and in parking lots to ensure comprehensive coverage.
- **Access Control Systems:** We offer robust access control solutions for dorms and apartments, including smart parking gates with ALPR readers, RFID tags, and temporary barcodes.
- **Detection Systems:** Our smart sensors in hallways, shared bathrooms, and dorms can detect vapor, smoke, and distress signals, while our weapon detection systems include audio, visual, and physical detection technologies.

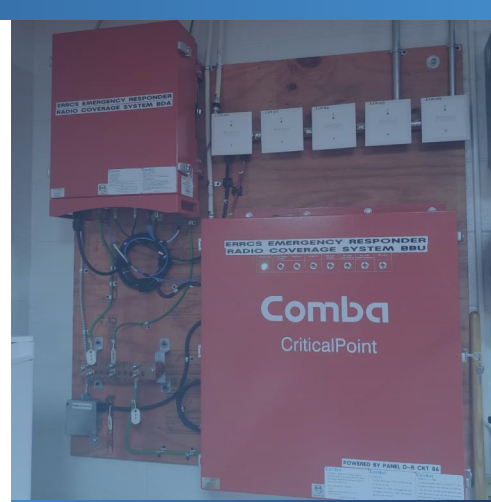
### Benefits of Partnering with MCA for Comprehensive Security Solutions

Partnering with MCA offers numerous benefits that enhance the overall security and safety of student housing environments:

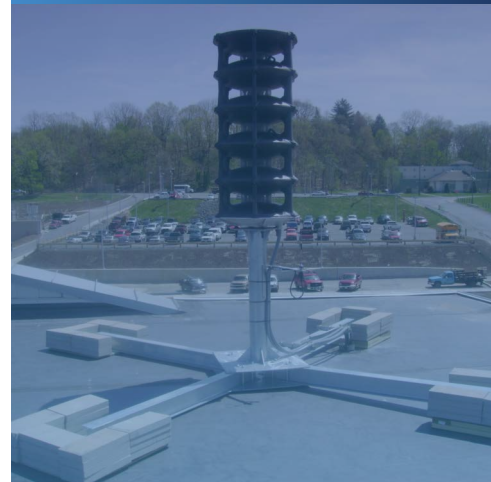
- **Expertise and Reliability:** With our extensive experience and specialized knowledge in the education sector, MCA is a reliable partner committed to delivering high-quality security solutions. Our expertise ensures that the unique needs of educational institutions are met with precision and care.
- **Tailored Solutions:** We understand that every campus is different, and we work closely with our partners to design and implement customized security solutions that address specific challenges. Our tailored approach ensures maximum effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Cutting-Edge Technology:** MCA leverages the latest technologies to provide state-of-the-art security systems. Our solutions are designed to be scalable and adaptable, ensuring that they can evolve with the changing needs of the campus environment.
- **Enhanced Safety and Peace of Mind:** Our comprehensive security solutions provide robust protection, enhancing the safety and well-being of students, staff, and faculty. This peace of mind allows the campus community to focus on what truly matters—education and personal growth.
- **Proactive and Responsive Support:** MCA offers ongoing support and maintenance for all our security systems. Our SecurePlan offering ensures that security devices and systems are regularly updated and maintained, providing continuous protection and reliability.

By choosing MCA as a partner, educational institutions can trust that they are receiving top-tier security solutions and services, backed by a team of dedicated professionals committed to creating safer and more secure campus environments.

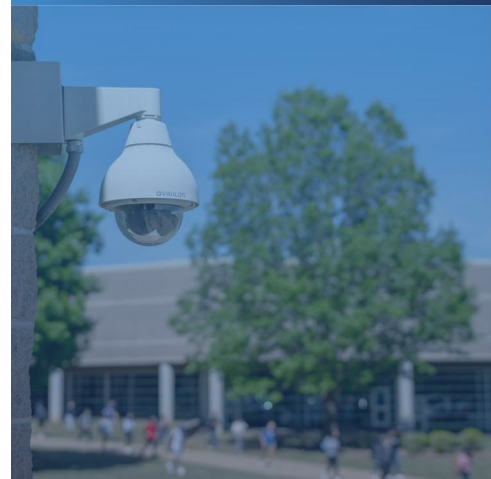
**Together, we can build a bright future for students, fostering an environment of unparalleled safety and security.**



Advanced surveillance with analytics, smart access control, and detection systems ensure comprehensive security in dorms, hallways, and parking lots.



Choosing MCA ensures top-tier security solutions, supported by dedicated professionals committed to creating safer, more secure campus environments.



## About MCA

MCA is one of the largest and most trusted technology integrators in the United States, offering world-class voice, data, and security solutions that enhance the quality, safety, and productivity of customers, operations, and lives.

More than 65,000 customers trust MCA to provide carefully researched solutions for a safe, secure, and more efficient workplace. As your trusted advisor, we reduce the time and effort needed to research, install, and maintain the right solutions to make your workplace better.

Our team of certified professionals across the United States delivers a full suite of reliable technologies with a service-first approach. The MCA advantage is our extensive service portfolio to support the solution life-cycle from start to finish.

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The MCA logo is rendered in a white, sans-serif font. The letter 'C' is stylized with a blue circular graphic element inside it, consisting of a solid blue ring and a white center, resembling a signal or a network node. The background of the entire page is a dark blue gradient with abstract white line art patterns, including a network diagram of nodes and connections in the upper right corner.