

# EMS Case Study *Hope College, Michigan*



## *EMS schedules rides in addition to rooms*

### Happy, Healthy and Hectic

Located five miles east of Lake Michigan, Holland, Mich. is the second happiest and healthiest place to live in the U.S., according to a 2010 Gallup poll, coming in just behind Boulder, Colo. and ahead of Honolulu, Hawaii.

One of the institutions that make Holland great is Hope College, a four-year liberal arts school that ensures its 3,200 students are going places, both academically and geographically.

With more than 80 majors and an emphasis on undergraduate research opportunities, Hope organizes a plethora of academic classes and opportunities each semester.

The college started using EMS for its academic scheduling in 2008 by hand entering 20,000 reservations into the scheduling software.

“It was pretty labor intensive, but well worth it,” said Assistant Director of the Events and Conferences Office Heather Roden.

Once officials were using EMS for academic scheduling, the school expanded its “EMS conquests” to include its catering and athletic departments’ calendaring and room reservation needs, Roden said.

### Fast Facts

- **3,200** students
- **1,129** group bookings in one semester
- **1,294** student rides in one semester

### Unhappy Hauling

One area of Hope’s scheduling system remained decades behind in efficiency and efficacy – the school’s transportation department.

Reserving one of the college’s six buses, two cars or 15 vans proved to be a hassle for both student groups and staff, with orders not processed in a timely manner, no comprehensive reporting abilities and an antiquated billing system. The transportation department was focused on the short term when it came to getting members of the campus community from point A to B and new equipment was acquired based on the amount of time that had passed since the last vehicle purchase rather than carefully determined transportation needs.

“We realized that we needed to develop a better way of giving the department a record of how much

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money they've spent, doing things faster and being able to ask, 'Do we really do need to buy another vehicle? Is that something we really need to go forward with?'" Roden said.

## When Rooms Have Vroom

Remaining true to the college's creative spirit, scheduling staff came up with a unique approach to arranging transportation for individual students, sports teams and student organizations – they decided to treat each vehicle as a "room" available for reservation in EMS.

"We decided we were going to use EMS as the reservation, customer service, billing reconciliation tool," said Assistant Director of Computing and Information Technology Margie Wiersma.

One-time and recurring requests for vehicles can now be made online through the transportation department's EMS portal. If an intermural team needs transportation to a one-time, overnight event, a team member or coach can enter a reservation request in the system, complete with details such as the need for a trailer hitch. If a student organization needs transportation to and from a weekly event, it can enter a reoccurring request, rather than booking the same transportation service every week.

This fall, student organizations and sports teams made 364 reservations and 1129 bookings.

Scheduling staff approves each request and three members of the transportation team receive a report

each afternoon detailing the vehicles that will be headed out on the road the next day. Billing has been dramatically fast tracked, with EMS automatically calculating the cost and assigning the bill to the appropriate account number – rather than the old, paper process that could take up to two months to complete an invoice.

Hope's transportation department also offers individual students rides to doctor's appointments, off-campus jobs, internships and the airport at just \$2 per trip. A student goes through the same, simple reservation process – once for pickup on campus and again for their return trip – by requesting a ride rather than a vehicle and including the starting and end locations.

Although some staff members were slightly resistant to the new reservation technology, students quickly gravitated to the EMS system's convenience.

The student ride program saw 360 reservations this fall with 1,294 bookings.

Moving from the old, three-part paper system to EMS accomplished the school's goal of providing better customer service in addition to rides, Roden said.

By treating vehicles as rooms in EMS, Hope College's transportation services have truly arrived.

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