



Controlling Higher Ed Print & Mail Costs with Operational *Efficiency*

Solve logistics overload, create new revenue streams, & raise student satisfaction



Amid tightening budgets, services that students pay for in addition to their tuition—like dining services, campus housing, and campus stores—provide important revenue streams for universities.

And perhaps just as importantly, these services have a direct impact on student satisfaction.

Two services, mailroom logistics and print center operations, have become vitally important for auxiliary service managers.

Even as packages flood the mailroom, students expect the pickup process to be streamlined. Meanwhile, students and faculty rely on off-campus vendors for print jobs, which takes revenue away from the university — even as the school pays to maintain a fleet of machines.

Between fewer resources and rising student expectations, auxiliary service managers are often stretched too thin to solve these problems themselves.

This guide breaks down each problem and provides practical solutions that colleges around the country are adopting today.

Challenge

Surging Package Volume & Delivery Logistics

Campus mailrooms are struggling to adapt to an exponential increase in package volume and reinvent themselves as a centralized pickup center.



New Expectations for Pickup

Like a river with many tributaries, the mail center used to receive incoming mail and distribute it to dorms and offices around campus. However, the legacy workflows designed decades ago aren't effective for modern delivery and pickup logistics.

Carriers, like USPS and FedEx, rarely take packages directly to their intended destination. They simply don't have time to navigate the maze-like infrastructure of college campuses. Instead, they drop packages at the mail center.



of universities have experienced an **increase** or significant increase in package volume.¹

Mailrooms have quickly discovered that delivering packages around campus isn't equivalent to distributing letters. Packages often get left behind a desk until the recipient shows up to claim them. The chain of custody is lax, and packages are often lost. Instead, students and faculty are flocking to the mail center to claim deliveries.

More Packages Than Ever

Campus mailrooms were primarily designed to handle mail in envelopes. But over the past decade, envelope-based mail has decreased significantly. Meanwhile, online shopping habits have driven a surge in package volume.



Because mailrooms weren't designed for this kind of logistics, universities are scrambling to store and distribute the tidal wave of parcels and packages they receive every month.

Updating Outdated Infrastructure

Try as they might, legacy mailrooms can't handle these new requirements without the right infrastructure. The challenge is twofold: finding the room to store all these packages and creating a system to manage deliveries and notify faculty and students to pick up their packages.



The workspace can become cluttered, unsafe, and inefficient without the appropriate storage. Without the right technology to manage package flow and notify recipients, mailroom staff will quickly become overwhelmed.

The Impact?

Longer Waiting Times

Without a scalable system for coordinating pickups, long wait times will become the norm as staff scrambles to locate the right package.

Lost Packages

The chain of custody matters and packages will be lost without a digital record of the entire process.

Lower Satisfaction

Students and faculty are used to receiving packages easily at home. If universities can't make pickup convenient, satisfaction with the service will plummet.

Solution

Optimizing Package Pickup

Smart Lockers for Self-Service Pick Up

If getting packages into the hands of students is the challenge, smart lockers are the solution. Recipients receive notifications as soon as their package is stored in the locker. With a student or faculty ID, they can pick up deliveries without the help of mailroom staff.

End-to-End Tracking

Every modern mailroom needs software to manage its operations. Solutions that offer end-to-end tracking for chain of custody, cost data for shipping, and pickup logistics can transform how campus mailrooms operate.

Get in touch to learn more about ARO's smart locker management.

[Add Smart Lockers to Your Mailroom](#)



Challenge

Fragmented Print Processes

Without consistent data collection or a centralized print management process, print centers on campuses have become cost centers when they could be a revenue source.



Decentralized Printing Operations

Many universities lack a framework for managing print jobs for faculty and students. Requests are handled ad-hoc without a standardized, IT-approved process, with significant variation in delivery quality.



As a result, faculty and students rely on off-campus vendors for their printing— with no fixed control costs.

Lack of Meaningful Reporting

Without the right operational infrastructure, campus print centers are often forced to rely on legacy manual processes that don't produce or collect any meaningful data that can be used to measure performance. Important key performance indicators like on-time delivery percentage, volume, usage, and cost numbers aren't tracked or measured.



Without this data, it's almost impossible to identify ways to improve the print center's operations or create a more streamlined experience for students.

Go From Breaking Even to Profit Center

University print centers are expected to create environments where printing is simple and addresses a student's needs. Other fundamental jobs like business cards and letterhead paper can also be part of a print center's offering, but awareness of these services can vary from university to university. And if print center services are run inefficiently they will lose money due to outdated operational structure, lack of transparency, and non-existent reporting.

The average college student uses

320 pounds of paper each year.⁴

This creates an environment where the goal for a university print center is to operate at a break even rate. Instead, print centers can be optimized to become profit centers for their universities and solutions for their students.

The Impact?

Lost Revenue Opportunities

As commercial print jobs are outsourced, the university loses the opportunity to charge for those services and thus loses revenue.

Higher Printing Costs

When faculty and students use off-campus printing services and cost controls cannot be implemented, costs rise.

Lower Student & Faculty Satisfaction

If people can't trust the print center to deliver, they'll stop going and seek other alternatives.

Solution

Turn Your Print Center Into a *Revenue Center*

In-Source Printing Services

Auxiliary services can be revenue sources for universities if they operate efficiently. The print center is a prime example. By creating a centralized approach to operations, installing the right equipment for the job, and consistently delivering quality service, the print center can “in-source” jobs and become a trusted resource for students and faculty.

Track Volume, Usage, and Cost

Like the mailroom, the print center also needs the right software to streamline its operations. Solutions that track and process requests, report utilization data, and record student satisfaction provide managers with the insight they need to increase operational efficiency.

Implementing a reliable cost-tracking system can also uncover opportunities to save significant resources.

Finding the Right Managed Print & Mail *Provider*

Given the resource and time constraints facing auxiliary service managers, partnering with an outsourced managed service provider is the best path to improving mail and print services.

Managed service providers add the talent universities need to get the work done and also bring strategic expertise to set the right course. But not all service providers are the same. It's vital to select an organization that meets the needs of your campus.

Managed Services Designed for Your Goals

At ARO, we've worked with universities across the country. Through our experience with higher education clients, we've developed a proven process for optimizing how campus operations run.

Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, we learn each university's requirements, assess its current operations, and customize our services to deliver the outcomes.

Measure What Matters with AROworks

Built on our decades of experience managing print and mail rooms, AROworks tracks and reports data that matters. Instead of focusing on mail volumes, it reports on the total cost savings. Rather than only tracking jobs done, AROworks measures on-time delivery and student satisfaction.

The system is designed to drive business outcomes for print centers and mail rooms. Its intuitive reporting delivers operational insights that enable cost savings and revenue generation without sacrificing the service quality that students care about.



Find the Best *Path Forward*

Get in touch today to discover how ARO's managed print and mail services can work for your campus, or to see how AROworks can visualize cost-saving opportunities in your operations.

Get in Touch



Sources:

¹ Challenges stack up for package delivery on campus, Pitney Bowes, 2020

² 2019 In-plant Printing and Mailing Association (IPMA) Survey

³ 2018 Association of College and University Printers (ACUP) study

⁴ Dump and Run, Inc.