The Background –
What do you do when you have a brand-new 147,000 square foot University Center and the majority of the meeting rooms are two floors above where the main traffic and building security are located? Jason Winget and other staff at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls decided the best way to provide the needed security would be to have the door unlock/locking mechanisms operate “on-line” with a software interface between the EMS room scheduling software and the Ingersoll Rand building security software. The new UWRF - University Center would use card access for all the meetings rooms and for access (both stairway and elevator) to the top floor meeting room areas. Staff in the building could then use computer screens to have a continuous view showing which doors in the building are in a locked or unlocked.

The Problem –
The UWRF University Center is managed by undergraduate student employees (UC Building Managers) who function as the main point of security and building operations during the entire 17-hour workday the building is open. "This is rather unusual for most universities to have students in this role" - Cara Rubis - University Center Director. An average day sees nearly 6,500 visitors through the building and maintaining security automatically is very important for the UC Building Managers to be successful in this critical role. Active shooter events occurring across the nation drove home the importance of having technology assist the security and building operations staff quickly and efficiently in an emergency. "At the time the University Center was being constructed, we had some technology hardware theft on campus. In looking at the amount of new technology in those spaces, and trying to cover all areas with only one University Center Building Manager, it just made sense to use the technology we had to be more efficient and effective." says Jason Winget – UWRF Infrastructure & Security Technologies Manager.

The solution –
At the time, EMS did not have a partner or affiliation with Ingersoll Rand, so an in-house interface needed to be written and tested. While a third party solution might have been available, the budget for the new University Center did not have the extra funds needed to out-source the interface development. The UWRF - EMS Database administrator – Charles Rickard (Chuck) worked with the talented staff at Dean Evans to write the interface. Because the Dean Evans team planned ahead and developed an open database, Chuck was able to design the interface with EMS quickly and at no additional cost to the University. The trigger points for determining when the meeting room doors should unlock before a meeting and relock after a meeting is based on a combination of “event status” and “event type”. After the initial testing and adjustments, the system has been working successfully.
For example, if an event status is “confirmed” and the event type is “meeting” then the door will unlock approximately 15 minutes before the event start time on the room booking. The doors will relock approximately 5 minutes after the event end time on the room booking. If the event status on a reservation is “confirmed” and the event type is “maintenance” or “internal” the doors do not unlock. However, a UC Building manager or other designated maintenance employee can still use their card access to over-ride the locking process to enter the room. The public elevator and third floor doors will also unlock 15 minutes before and lock 5 minutes after the last scheduled meeting on that level which offers even greater security.

Fast Facts:
UWRF University Center Fast Facts:
Hosts nearly 250 events per week
On an average Monday – Thursday, 7150 visitors enter the building
Number of University Center Building Managers on duty each hour the building is open = 1

Challenge to change—
With any new process, there are sometimes challenges. For example, the customers will “assume” they can arrive at a reserved room 45 minutes early to prepare for the meeting. The automatic door locking system tied to EMS does allow for a 10-15 minute lead-time for those events that are not reserved back-to-back. When groups arrive too early for their scheduled meeting, the UC Building Managers help the groups gain access to the space using their ID card access and also explain the door locking system to the customer. In this way, customers learn to schedule the amount of setup time they need for events making everything in the building work more smoothly. This process also helps the customers using the building to get to know the UC Building Manager staff and understand that the UC Building Managers are here to assist customers in making their event a success.

Tweaks to the original system—
Some of our facilities have multiple entry doors and there was a need for more flexibility to program which doors unlocked at a specific time than the original door unlock process would allow. By adjusting the programming code, and adding a “door unlock” resource to EMS, we are able to manage the time specific door(s). This feature is very useful when a customer is planning to charge a fee to attend an event. We can then leave this event in a “locked” position for all the doors except the one door we
used the EMS resource to unlock for ticket selling. This is also very useful for a group wanting to come in and decorate for an event in the morning, but the event start time is not until later in the evening.

Using EMS and Ingersoll Rand software to automatically unlock and lock meeting room doors in the University Center has improved security, safety and efficiency. It has also saved staffing dollars and improved customer satisfaction according to our survey data. Each of the meeting rooms contains somewhat portable audio, visual and technical equipment and allowing the additional security of the auto door locking process has proven to be very successful in the University Center.

“The role of the UWRF ID Carding Office is to find ways to use the technology we have to save money and human resources. The interface between Ingersoll Rand and EMS is a model for success here at UWRF and we would love to be able to incorporate this same technology to our other campus buildings to save even more money and resources.” – Jason Winget -UWRF Infrastructure & Security Technologies Manager.