URBAN AIRSHIP

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Keeping Students and Staff Safe with Emergency Push Notifications

University of Alberta's Objectives

- Give students easy access to academic resources

- Allow students to view campus information such as transit times and campus maps

- Keep students safe and informed about emergencies through push notifications
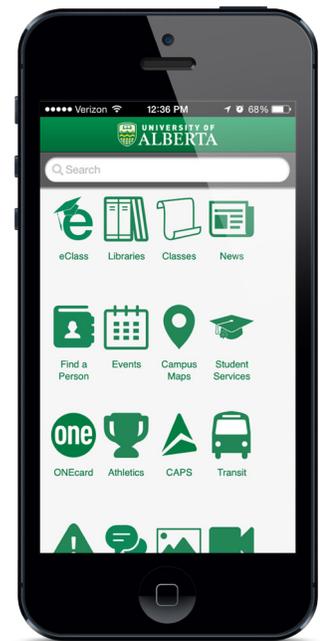
A student's life can be hectic with classes, deadlines and commutes. The University of Alberta, one of Canada's largest public research universities, brings clarity to the chaos with its mobile app.

Located in Edmonton, Canada, the University of Alberta has four campus locations and more than 36,000 students enrolled in academic programs.

The university uses an app as a way to connect students with academic resources such as classes and student services, as well as other aspects of college life such as events. The app also includes campus maps and compiles data from transportation resources to help students commute between campuses.

The app is installed across 73,000 devices, with a 75% opt-in rate for push notifications. Both faculty and students have the app downloaded and from install numbers, it's likely many users have installed the app across multiple devices.

The University of Alberta uses push notifications to quickly administer emergency alerts to the student body.

The University of Alberta keeps students and faculty informed about emergency situations with push notifications.

RESULTS

⬆ **75%**

A jump in app users opting in to receive push notifications.

"Urban Airship gives us a window into the health of our app and how our users are engaging. Reliability is key—we can trust Urban Airship to deliver push notifications immediately and seamlessly, helping us keep our students safe."

John Komick,
Team Lead, App Development, IST at University of Alberta

For example, the university recently discovered a gas leak in one of its buildings that housed student residences, food vendors, art studios and student services. It was crucial to notify students as soon as possible to exit and evacuate the building, so the University of Alberta team sent a push notifications telling people the building is closed and to leave due to emergency.

Although the university sends this information through several conduits including social channels and email, push notifications have proved to be the most efficient and successful.

"Push notifications lets us send vital information to our students at once," said John Komick, Team Lead, Application Development, IST at University of Alberta. "If there's something important, students are going to hear about it," he said.

After sending a push notification, the university sees a spike in app opens. Push has been effective at keeping students safe because urgent alerts can be delivered in seconds, and push can cut through the clutter to gain immediate attention.

The most significant advantage the University of Alberta has found using Urban Airship is the ability to see how its users act in the app.

Komick said, "it's important for us to see the amount of time people are spending in the app—Urban Airship enables us to see where our users are spending their time, letting us explore how we can keep them engaged."