University of Maryland, Baltimore County: Social-to-SAML Gateway

The business pain point

At the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), new students and their parents attend summer orientations to learn all about the campus. Parents always ask, "how can I access information about my child's course schedule, tuition, and their grades"? For years, the answer was, "talk to your kid!", which helps, but becomes more difficult once kids become engrossed in their college lives. Parents need a way to check in without having to track down their sons and daughters.

Access to student data requires both security and convenience. The campus' protected online resources require login, but parents don't want to have to create an account at the university and remember yet another username and password.

HIGHLIGHTS ABOUT CIRRUS' SERVICES

"We don't have to worry about the issues around account creation and forgotten passwords."

-Todd Haddaway, Director Enterprise Data

How did Cirrus Identity help?

Vice Provost for Enrollment Management at UMBC asked campus IT leadership to explore solutions that would grant parents easy access to student information and still guarantee students the ability to grant and revoke access as they chose.

In 2014, UMBC put in place parent access with Cirrus Identity's Gateway Service. Students can log into the campus portal, submit an email address for the person they'd like to invite, and choose the information they would like to share. Students still have control over their information.

When parents receive the invitation email, they get to choose a social identity provider (UMBC elected to integrate with Google or Facebook) to use as a profile account. The Cirrus Gateway eliminates the need for parents to create another profile to keep track of. For all future access, parents don't have to remember a specific 'username' and 'password'. This gets parents access quickly and with no hassle, and eliminates the ongoing operating expense of managing a guest account service.
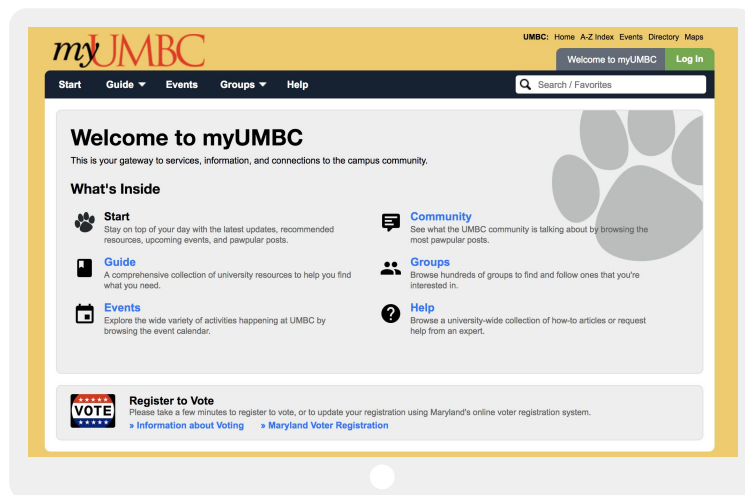
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What do users see?

To invite parents/guardians to view student information, students begin by logging in to the myUMBC portal, entering the email address of the person they'd like to share information with, and selecting the specific information they want to share. UMBC has a homegrown email-based invitation that is initiated to register the social account the parent wishes to use for future access.

When the parent/guardian later visits the myUMBC portal, they will see Google and Facebook as login options.

They choose the one they registered, and the login itself is handled via the Cirrus Identity Gateway Service. Cirrus Identity translates the authentication protocol into SAML, and maps the attributes from the social providers into standard eduPerson schema.

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Integration highlights

- Who uses the service? Students and Parents
- Product integrations? Homegrown web portal, PeopleSoft Campus Solutions (via API)
- Cirrus products? Gateway Service

WHY DID YOU GO WITH CIRRUS ID?

"Their Social-to-SAML gateway affords us the ability to focus on quality content rather than protocol differences between identity providers."

-UMBC