# University of North Carolina, The RAM Shop

**SUMMARY**

Lexmark meets the unique needs of incoming students at UNC by teaming with the University's bookstore to offer an affordable and reliable all-in-one printer selection. The approach is convenient and efficient for students and minimizes technical support requirements for students and University staff.

# University offers Lexmark printers to incoming students through unique distribution program

## The Organization

Chartered in 1789 and opened to students in 1795, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill holds the distinction of being the first state university in the United States. Today, its expansive 729-acre campus is home to a faculty of 3,100, educating a current enrollment of more than 27,000 students from all 50 United States and 100 countries.

Through the University's coordinated technology plan, the Carolina Computing Initiative, the University ensures that students, faculty and staff have easy access to high-quality, affordable technology. To fulfill this mission, the University sells laptops and printers to incoming freshmen through the RAM Shop, UNC's on-campus, self-supporting technology retail store.

The RAM Shop is a member of the Campus Computer Resellers Alliance, whose mission is to provide and advocate programs and services that campus retailers need to sustain viable businesses volumes while effectively supporting the academic objectives of their colleges and universities.

## The Challenge

Each of the nearly 3,750 incoming freshmen at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is required to own a laptop computer. More than 90 percent of them opt to purchase one through the RAM Shop. Many also purchase a printer at the same time.

To simplify purchasing, fulfillment and ongoing support, the University offers a limited menu of two laptop models and up to four printer models. Students arrive for orientation and their computer technology is handed out in a convenient and efficient assembly line fashion, including laptops, printers and accessories.

"We have unique challenges that make selecting the right products for this program a very important decision. Seemingly simple things such as the length of the warranty, printer drivers and having a USB cable in the box make a big difference when serving such a large number of students in such a short window of time."

UNC STUDENT STORES

—John Gorsuch
Manager of the RAM Shop
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, N.C.
www.store.unc.edu

Choosing the right product offerings is essential for the initiative to succeed. Products selected for this coordinated technology plan must be affordable and reliable. Printer drivers must be "plug and play," and the printer must be capable of producing high-quality text and photo-quality color output.

Ease of use also is essential, said John Gorsuch, manager of the RAM Shop. "With about 3,750 students arriving each Fall, it's vital to minimize the impact to our small technical support staff," he said.

> "Lexmark understands the unique business of selling to a large university population. In our analysis, we determined that Lexmark has the right products to fit our technology program. More importantly, Lexmark was willing to be flexible in its offering to meet our needs, such as including a USB cable in the box and extending the traditional warranty to three years."
>
> —John Gorsuch

Complicating matters is scheduling. Unlike a typical store that sells items throughout the year with a peak at Christmas, the RAM Shop distributes nearly all of its technology products in June, July and August, as incoming freshmen arrive on campus for their Fall semester orientation sessions. Availability of adequate inventory in this narrow window is crucial. Price is critical as well. The Ram Shop competes with computer retailers so the products it offers must be priced competitively.

According to Gorsuch, many printer manufacturers don't understand the requirements of a college environment. "We have unique challenges that make selecting the right products for this program a very important decision," Gorsuch said. "Seemingly simple things such as the length of the warranty, printer drivers and having a USB cable in the box make a big difference when serving such a large number of students in such a short window of time."

### The Solution
For its primary printer offering, the University's RAM Shop selected an inkjet all-in-one solution from Lexmark. The product combines photo-quality color printing, document scanning and copying in a single unit priced at less than $60.

Capable of printing at speeds up to 17 pages per minute in black and white, and up to 15 pages per minute in color, the Lexmark printer also offers PictBridge capability, allowing students to print photos by connecting their digital camera directly to the printer. The built-in flatbed color scanner is perfect for handling books.

In addition, Lexmark's printer drivers are pre-loaded onto the University's laptops, making printer installation for students a snap.

"Lexmark understands the unique business of selling to a large university population," said Gorsuch. "In our analysis, we determined that Lexmark has the right products to fit our technology program. More importantly, Lexmark was willing to be flexible in its offering to meet our needs, such as including a USB cable in the box and extending the traditional warranty to three years."

Beyond product capabilities, the University maintains high expectations regarding the relationship with its technology suppliers. "We've found Lexmark to be very responsive and reachable, a distinct advantage," said Gorsuch. "Some of Lexmark's competitors offer a one-size-fits-all solution and that just won't work for us."

### The Results
How well is the affiliation between Lexmark and UNC working? "We've had quite a few major universities send representatives here to study our program," Gorsuch said. "Our relationship with Lexmark is a model that is being replicated by other universities nationwide."

> "We've found Lexmark to be very responsive and reachable, a distinct advantage. Some of Lexmark's competitors offer a one-size-fits-all solution and that just won't work for us."
>
> —John Gorsuch

For the University, choosing a reliable Lexmark product minimizes the need for ongoing support. Responsive to the RAM Shop's schedule of distributing nearly 1,500 printers in June, July and August, Lexmark's flexibility guarantees product availability.

Students who might find even the discounted price of a laptop computer taxing quickly snap up Lexmark's highly affordable multifunction inkjet printer at the same time. They now print projects in their dormitory rooms, eliminating trips to the library and reducing traffic on the University's campus network.

Pre-selecting the Lexmark printers for the program also makes it easier for the Ram Shop to stock the right supplies so that students can always get the ones they need without making a trip off campus.

> "We've had quite a few major universities send representatives here to study our program. Our relationship with Lexmark is a model that is being replicated by other universities nationwide."
>
> —John Gorsuch

As thousands of students use Lexmark printers throughout their college years, Lexmark's reputation for quality, reliability and affordability are continually reinforced, making it more likely they will purchase and recommend Lexmark well after graduation.

The unique needs of offering thousands of affordable, reliable printers to a university campus and supporting those products is a challenge that not all vendors are equipped to meet. For the RAM Shop and John Gorsuch, choosing Lexmark is a decision that puts the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and its 27,000 students at the top of the class.

71k7315

**LEXMARK** ™