

Dear Campus Community,

Over the past four weeks, I have received several thoughtful questions about Flock Safety cameras on or around campus from students, employees, and members of our community. Given the recent attention surrounding the use of these systems, I have been asking some of these same questions myself over the summer and certainly understand why members of our community want to know more about the technology in place at Frostburg State University.

What I have learned in the process is this:

What are those Flock cameras?

The cameras installed around our campus are not Flock Safety cameras but are Genetec automated license plate readers (ALPRs).

What, if anything, is the difference?

While both systems capture license plate information and thus appear on the websites listing the ALPR cameras, the data read by the camera systems are handled in significantly different ways.

With Flock, the data is shared across a multi-agency network, meaning that other Flock users can access and view the data from Flock cameras without any knowledge of or input from the areas that have the cameras.

With Genetec, the system utilized by FSU, the data only exists within the University's security infrastructure and is controlled by the FSUPD. Anyone else seeking to access this data must go through our campus police. The system integrates license plate information into the University Police security system and gives the department control over how the system and data is managed and accessed.

As one point of comparison, [Stanford University recently ended its contract with Flock](#) and has moved to the same Genetec technology used at FSU.

Where did the cameras come from? When did they get here?

Following a series of shootings on Maryland college campuses in 2023, the State of Maryland made grant funding available to public universities to strengthen campus security. Frostburg State University used those funds to purchase security cameras and the Genetec ALPR system. The cameras have been in place since June 23, 2025.

What additional precautions are in place around the data?

There are important safeguards governing the system. All data and images collected by the ALPRs are for official University Police use and are not available for general University purposes.

Installation and maintenance of the equipment, as well as oversight of data retention and access, is managed by the Chief of University Police or a designated Administrative Sergeant within FSUPD. Anyone who operates or accesses the equipment or its data must first complete department-approved training.

The system captures license plate; vehicle make and model and associated still images as they pass the readers. This data is retained for **30 days** and then automatically purges unless it has become, or is reasonably expected to become, evidence in a criminal investigation. Since the system was installed, images have been preserved beyond the 30-day retention period on one occasion, in connection with an armed robbery investigation.

Access to the data is restricted to authorized personnel and limited to legitimate law-enforcement purposes, requiring an active case number and documented reason for viewing. Officers must log into the system and enter the applicable case number, then select the reason for accessing the data from a designated list, including BOLO Query, Crime Scene Query, Crime Trend Analysis, Traffic Incident, Criminal Investigation or Training Purposes. This information is recorded and retained in the system for auditing purposes.

The equipment and data it collects are not intended, used, or available for general surveillance of the campus or the surrounding community. Requests from other law enforcement agencies to access ALPR data must be submitted in writing on agency letterhead and include the requesting agency's name, the name of the requesting officer, and the intended purpose for accessing the data.

The cameras are positioned at key approaches to campus to assist University Police with public safety and law enforcement responsibilities, including identifying vehicles that may be relevant to an investigation. Their presence should not be interpreted as an indication that Frostburg State University is a high-crime campus, nor are they intended to monitor the campus community generally but rather as part of an ongoing effort to ensure that Frostburg State University continues to be a safe learning and working environment for our students, faculty, and staff.

I hope this provides some clarity about the technology we use, why it was installed, and the safeguards that govern its use. I appreciate the willingness of our campus safety leaders to engage with the questions and conversations over the past few weeks that prompted us to provide this information to our campus community.

Sincerely,

Shadow JQ Robinson, PhD
President