

# Humber College

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**Campus Location:** Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**Enrollment:** 86,000

**Campus Type:** Public, Urban

The Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, known as Humber College, is based in Toronto. Humber is a public university and the largest polytechnic in Canada, enrolling 86,000 students and employing 3,400 faculty and staff members across two campuses: Humber North and Lakeshore.

In 2007, one of the deadliest mass shootings in the United States occurred at Virginia Tech – 33 people died, including the shooter. This event prompted many post-secondary institutions, including Humber College, to research mass notification solutions to help protect their communities. Around this time, Alertus also began offering free desktop alerting software to schools across North America.

We spoke with Kathy Branton, Manager of Business Continuity and Emergency Management at Humber College, to learn about their experience with the Alertus System. Branton oversees Humber's Emergency Operations Center and mass notification system.

Humber has had mass notification in place since 2013. They've integrated Alertus with Rave's AppArmour platform, using the AppArmour dashboard to send push notifications through Alertus Desktop™ Notifications, Alert Beacons®, networked VoIP phones, and digital signage. They can activate and deactivate alerts everywhere, including Alertus, from AppArmor.

Branton noted that Alertus is exceptionally easy to use, understand, and activate. They have about 20 Alert Beacons on their campuses and will soon be integrating Alertus' Text-to-Speech technology into their fire panel and an LED Marquee.





*The wall-mounted Alertus Alert Beacon® sounds, flashes, and displays an alert message in the event of an emergency.*

“We use and activate the Alertus system constantly,” said Branton. “We have preset templates for weather emergencies, for example, but often customize them depending on the situation, which can be managed easily in the system. Each time that we have had to distribute messages, we’ve been happy with the effectiveness of the system.”

Branton has recommended Alertus to other institutions and is most impressed by the Text-to-Speech Interface that connects to the fire panel which will allow them to use the PA System to send out notifications. “I am very excited about installing it soon,” said Branton.

Going forward, Humber College is interested in creating an Alertus sandbox lab on their North campus, to provide a space for identified employees to interact with and test Alertus products.

That way, those activating the system

are well-versed, prepared, and comfortable using the Alertus system in real emergency scenarios.

“It’s a fantastic idea,” said Branton. “One of the reasons we wanted to do this lab is because of an incident last fall in which a student pressed one of our panic buttons on the wall at our International Graduate School (IGS) that said ‘emergency’ on it. “By pressing the button, the student activated AppArmor, the Alert Beacons, our digital signage, and desktops, and the police also responded immediately.” After this incident, the Department of Public Safety re-labeled the button to be more specific with “Active Attacker” and added a screamer lid if opened.

The “Active Attacker” duress button is connected directly to an Alert Beacon which sends the activation to onsite endpoints, their electronic access control system, and upstream to AppArmor. They built their system this way to diversify points of failure.

“The lab would be useful for people to be able to turn the buttons on and off and test them before setting them up at our campuses. It would mitigate risk and allow us to explore the system and ensure everything works as intended,” said Branton. They hope to set up the lab sometime this year.



*Alertus Text-to-Speech Interface provides clear spoken voice output of message text*