

**NACAS**

**Matt Marcial Ready  
to Move NACAS to the  
Next Level**

**Key Factors for Success in  
Higher Education**

**Examples of Excellence:  
The 2021 NACAS Annual  
Award Winners**

WINTER 2021

# college services

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**Lorelle Davies, CASP**

Director of Auxiliary Services

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**03**

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**02**

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**04**

**Model** | Slingshot Premium



## college services



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# NACAS CEO Matt Marcial Shares First 100 days and Vision for the Future

It's hard to believe that 2021 is already coming to a close. This week marks 100 days on the job as your NACAS CEO and I could not be more energized for what is on the horizon. I have enjoyed connecting with many NACAS Institutional Members, volunteer leaders, Business Partners, and other stakeholders to understand how NACAS can best serve our community and be sustainable well into the future. I'd like to thank all of the individuals that I have had the opportunity to speak to and let you know that my staff and I will continue to listen and adjust our approach and member service in response. Some of my highlights since joining the association have been attending C3X in person in Atlantic City, as well as visiting a few campuses and learning more about the trends and challenges impacting auxiliary services today. Now more than ever, there is incredible disruption facing auxiliary services, from supply chain issues to labor shortages. These issues are requiring leaders to make difficult decisions, do more with less, and seek innovative solutions.

Over the last few months, I have heard quite a bit about the importance of auxiliary services impacting student success and the student experience. I encourage you to take a step back and look at how you are investing in your own professional development and the development of your team members at this crucial time. Amidst all of today's challenges, it can be easy to forgo continued professional development, but the benefits of learning and engaging with your NACAS colleagues will greatly outweigh the time commitment. Student success must start with your team.

While everyone has been weathering the same storm, each institution is facing its own unique challenges and tackling them in different ways. The NACAS community is a place where new ideas and innovative approaches can be shared. One of those places is our online forum, the NACAS Lounge. Next year, we are also bringing you in-person thought leadership opportunities, the first of which is our Senior Executive Summit from February 21-23 in Palm Springs, CA. This program has been reimagined for 2022 and we are bringing together senior leaders in the industry from both institutions and NACAS Business Partners to discuss some of these major challenges and help us to develop future content and serve a wider audience. Only a few spots remain! Learn more and register on the events menu at the top of [nacas.org](https://www.nacas.org).

The new year will also bring the return of in-person regional CX events, which I am personally very excited to experience for the first time. NACAS staff will continue to help support each of our regions execute their CX events to provide an outstanding local experience. If you have not yet had the opportunity to return to an in-person event since the pandemic began, I highly encourage you to participate, network, and learn with your regional colleagues. You will also want to mark your calendars now to join us in sunny Las Vegas for C3X, November 13-16. More exciting announcements will be coming as planning continues.

Another major initiative for NACAS is the development of our new strategic plan. In February we will be working with NACAS volunteer leaders to

develop a strategy that will help us better understand where we are now, where we want and need to go as an association, and how to attain those goals. Your voice is an important part of this process! We recently launched a member needs and satisfaction survey to help us better understand how we are serving our member institutions, which member benefits provide you the greatest value, and where we should focus our priorities for the next few years. There is also an opportunity to win one of several gift cards just for participating. Please take 5-10 minutes to share your voice and help us in this process. The link will be sent to all Institutional Members via email this month, and of course, all responses are anonymous.

In closing, I would like to give a special thank you to all the individuals and Business Partners who have supported the NACAS Foundation in 2021. The Foundation has done some great work this year in leading initiatives like our Campus Care Grants as well as several awards and scholarships to advance the professional development of our members. In 2022, Foundation Board volunteers and NACAS staff will be developing strategies to gain alignment on our focus and on ways to make the biggest impact serving our community. All contributions to the NACAS Foundation are tax deductible. Please consider making a donation before the end of the year on the Foundation website or via our social media.

Thank you for your involvement with NACAS, and I look forward to updating you on our progress in the months to come. Wishing you a restful break and happy holidays to you and yours! ■



## opening remarks

### Presidential Perspective

# Burned Out and Over-Burdened ... How About a New Puppy?



MATTHEW PORTNER, EJD,  
MEd, CASP  
NACAS PRESIDENT

**W**ine and late-night infomercials (now Amazon Prime) do not mix. Neither do pandemic isolation and puppy adoption websites. It is absolutely amazing what otherwise intelligent people can convince themselves of when they think they want something. Facing an indefinite remote work situation in the Spring of 2020, I convinced myself and my wife that if we were ever going to get a new puppy, this was the right time.

We already had a dog and two outside “working” cats. *Working cats are cats that I don’t name but do feed as long as they periodically bring me evidence that they are not just sleeping all day.* Life on the Ohio frontier was pretty simple. Everyone had their routine; daily chores came quick and easy. Our resident dog was old enough that she was only ever in a hurry to lay down. As much as the prospect was persuasive, I hoped for a pal whose energy matched mine. And believe it or not, I felt I had some energy to give.

So, let’s get a puppy.

In hindsight, my dream of a lap dog was gone when we pulled into the drive to pick up the puppy. From behind a gate, we saw a pony-sized creature bouncing like the legendary *Tigger*, Pooh’s friend from the Hundred Acre Woods. I immediately asked the puppy purveyor to explain the large bouncing beast to which he responded with some kind of Jedi mind-trick, simply saying “don’t worry, that’s not one of the parents.”

Clearly, I am the big dumb dummy.

Eighteen months later, I share my home with a sixty-pound Boxer-Collie named Vera. She is wonderful and exhausting. She and all my critters remind me that my attention and care is important and necessary. All the food, water, spills, corrective measures, muddy feet, and baths are all services that are or may be provided on a daily basis without even blinking. Focusing on these services has made me a better person.

Somehow, I came out of isolation and change with a renewed realization that commitment to others and service in that effort is good for me. Focused patience is good for me. Taking a breath and going for a walk outside is good for me. Sitting on the couch with an undersized pony and sharing the events of the day is also good for me.

Without the pandemic I doubt that I would have ever voluntarily opted for the trials of a new puppy. However, the experiences have reminded me about the value of service to others. It is not a stretch to see this service in our daily work as Auxiliary personnel.

Take some time as you toil on your campus to recognize that your service to your students, staff, and home institutions is likewise good for you too. It makes you better.

As 2022 quickly approaches, take some time to reflect on your friends and colleagues within NACAS. Remind yourself that simple service comes with benefits. Most of all, know that you all make me better too. ■



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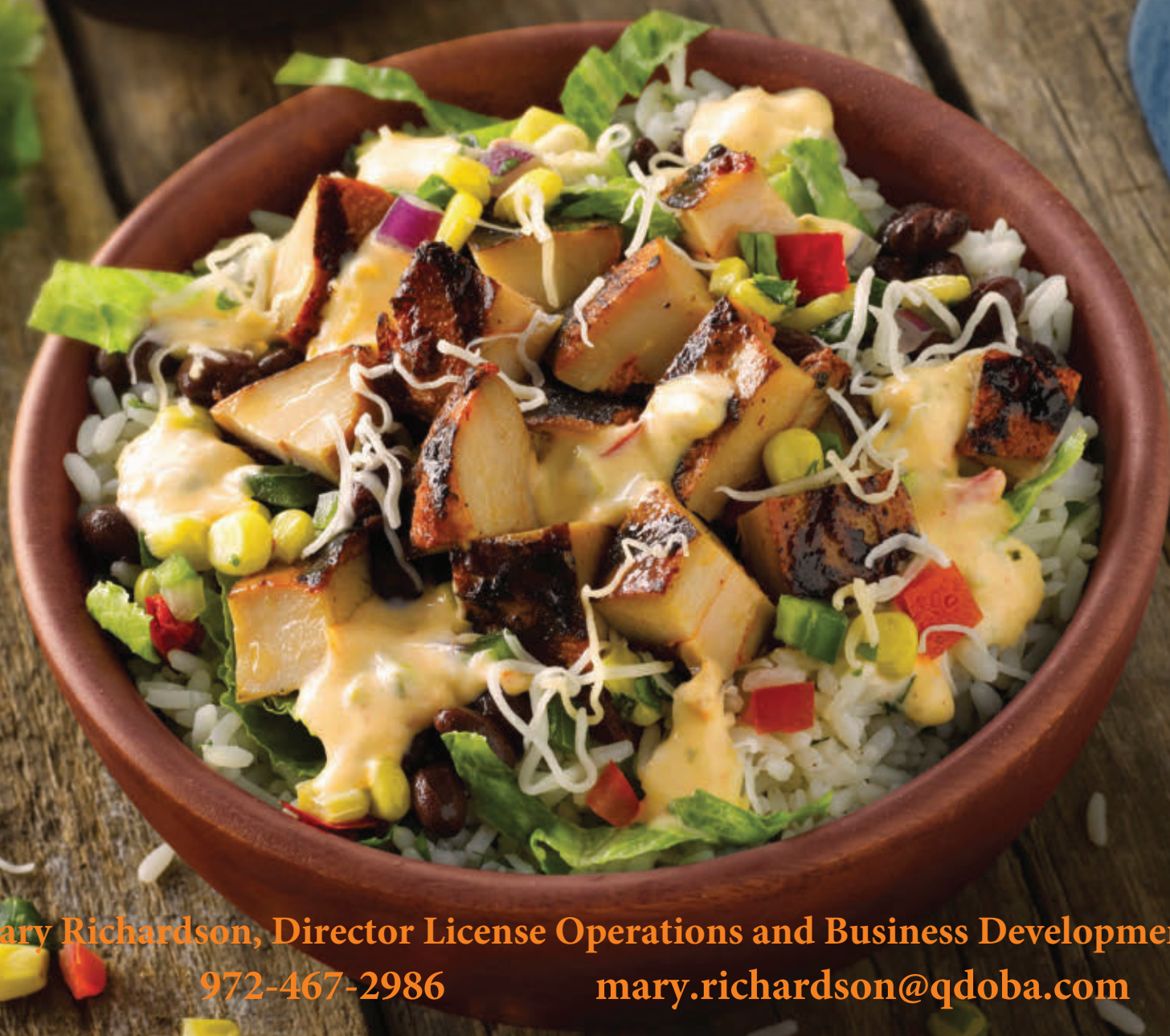
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# For **Matthew Portner**, a Career Established on ‘Timing, Ambition, and the Ability to Say Yes When Someone Asks You’ Has Led to the **NACAS President’s Role**

BY VICTORIA LIM

If you’re looking for proof that incoming NACAS President Matthew Portner, CASP, is loyal, here’s some: he’s been married to his wife Debbie for three decades. He enjoys a good walk spoiled, playing in not one, but two, golf leagues. And probably the most telling – he’s a season ticket holder for the Cleveland Browns.

“Long time suffering,” he chuckled.

Portner has also served NACAS for years since joining in 2003. But his pathway to service member began long before he officially joined the organization; during his time at the College of Wooster as a student worker doing everything from sweeping floors to answering phones.

“Things just happened. Timing, ambition, and the ability to say ‘yes’ when someone asks you,” he said.

After graduating with a biology degree, he worked in a toxicology lab starting a neurotoxicity program. Then in 1992, went back to his hometown to pursue his master’s degree in education at Ashland University.

He served as a graduate assistant in a recycling program, in charge of coordinating it from the ground up – creating educational sessions, to driving the trucks, to emptying bins, to managing a team of student workers. A year later, Ashland offered him a full-time job coordinating recycling and environmental health and safety. This involved writing policy statements, conducting employee trainings and managing OSHA and EPA regulations.

When the university moved its campus store from lease to independent, the vice president of business tapped Portner to broaden his experience base. He began as text manager, then moved to assistant manager and eventually store director.





ALLISON WALTZ-BOEBEL/EAGLEEYE PHOTOGRAPHY





Matthew Portner with designer Josh Grove in the Campus Store.

"We created a trademark and licensing program, installed and implemented the first point of sale (POS) system on campus. When I started, we didn't have computers in our offices. It was a different kind of time," Portner recalled.

He led the transition from manual registers to networked registers, developed a copyright management policy, text reservation program, and the school's first e-commerce page. After moving into auxiliary management, the store became one of the

10 departments under his supervision. The others included graphics, printing, memorabilia, artwork curation, retail properties, concessions, student dining, catering conferences, card office, vending, and laundry.

He says his master's in education helped him understand how to develop curriculum and provide instruction to a multi-generation population. Along the way, at age 41, he earned a law degree from Purdue Global, which he's found valuable in vendor relations, contract reading and writing, workplace employment law, copyright, trademarks, licensing and tenant relations.

"I certainly didn't even know these kinds of positions existed. The more you start working and someone taps you on shoulder and says, 'would you like to do this?', or 'go do this!'" he said. "All things come into play with our roles. Having a formal background in law has helped me navigate issues and problems much quicker."

While that has led to his current role as Executive Director of Auxiliary Services, he praises his staff of supervisors, directors and their direct reports for helping the school and students during the pandemic.

"Anyone can captain a ship in calm sea. But what we've been experiencing is captaining a ship that's upside down. The anxiety shared on both sides of the counter — managers, cashiers, customers — it's like nothing we could have ever prepared for," he said. "I'm in awe of our staff. The fact they can summon the strength to get out of bed and service students and staff is a testament to all of their characters. I'm so proud of everybody still plugging away every day."

Portner credits the networking and support from his NACAS relationships for helping him throughout his career. He calls many fellow members mentors and friends who he's gotten to know through the annual conferences and regional events. He's found reaching out to peers via the NACAS Lounge has been helpful in terms of asking for advice, best practices, experiences, and recommendations.

An example of how it helped him and Ashland: leveraging the resources from NACAS, Portner found a vendor that brought a new level of service to campus, from coin-operated laundry machines to being integrated into campus housing as an amenity. This change increased the value for students and, he said, the return-on-investment for the campus.

"In the pandemic things have been moving so quickly. You can't wait for an article to get published in a journal or trade magazine. You have to reach out to people, post questions, and quickly find out what's being done on another campus about a similar issue. You can't even put a price on the value of that," he said.

A large image of a Papa John's pizza with various toppings. Overlaid on the image is a red banner with the text "BETTER INGREDIENTS. BETTER PIZZA.®". Below the banner, the text "On Campus Franchise Opportunity" is written in a large, white, cursive font. Underneath that, in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, it says "DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES AVAILABLE" and "CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION". At the bottom, the Papa John's logo is displayed, followed by the email address "Franchise\_Opportunities@papajohns.com". At the very bottom, in small print, it says "Certain restrictions apply. Subject to change without notice. All benefits, discounts and payments subject to qualifications and franchisor's discretion. © 2021 Papa John's International, Inc. All Rights Reserved."





*Representative staff from Catering, Retail Properties, Student Dining, Culinary Services, and Auxiliary Services.*

Since joining NACAS, Portner has served in leadership roles at the regional level, foundation board, and various committees including the conference committee, nominating committee, executive committee and president-elect before assuming the role of president. He acknowledges the pandemic has been especially hard on the association, just like all other sectors of the economy. He believes there are volunteer opportunities within NACAS to help address

issues including supply chain, labor, and mental health.

"NACAS continues to be a support structure for each member institution. For reaching out to those institutions where we don't have members, making sure they have advocacy here that when they're ready, there will be people, colleagues, and peers to help them do what they need to do better with innovative solutions and new strategies for students," he said.

**HIS PRIORITY IS TO HELP THE NEW CEO DEFINE THE DIRECTION OF THE ORGANIZATION AND MAKE SURE NACAS HAS THE TOOLS TO BE SUCCESSFUL.**



*left to right: Amanda Brown, Campus Store Manager, Portner, and Designer, Josh Grove in the fully realized Campus Store production area.*

His priority is to help the new CEO define the direction of the organization and make sure NACAS has the tools to be successful. He would like to minimize staff turnover, leading to continuity. This year is about strategy, he said, especially during a time that has thrown the world into chaos.

But what he believes will indicate progress the most is to have the C3X 2022 in Las Vegas.

"The one thing I'm looking forward to from the loss we've suffered from not being able to see colleagues face-to-face is being able to return to face-to-face. You just lose something when only talking by phone or computer," he said. "If we can get big numbers to come back, we'll really be able to realize we did something and managed through this tumultuous time." ■

**VICTORIA LIM** is an award-winning journalist and multimedia storyteller. She has worked in higher education administration leading university communications and in academia as a professor of journalism.

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# Key Factors for Success in Higher Education Leadership

BY PAMELA L. MOORE

Leadership often takes on different meanings in different settings. One definition sums it up very well. "Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal".<sup>1</sup>

Oftentimes, that common goal is a moving target, as situations, environments, and even customer needs tend to change.

A typical example is the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has made on the world and has certainly upset the apple cart of what was once known as best practices for many organizations, and certainly for the world of higher education.

Higher education leaders at campuses across the nation were faced with a challenge to rally their troops to stay motivated and encouraged to continue providing excellence in service, while federal and

local guidelines changed sometimes daily regarding the appropriate protocols.

Leaders were tasked to ensure the day-to-day operations continued, while keeping a constant pulse on the ever-changing rules and regulations, all the while, planning and envisioning the next steps.

While some leaders succumbed to the overwhelming demands, others rose to the occasion to think out of the box, pivot, and reshape what once was a rock solid, proven business plan. *Re-imagining is a key factor.*

Although the pandemic has certainly wreaked havoc with what was considered the norm, the challenges faced by leaders in higher education, as well as other industries, extend far beyond times of crisis.

Many factors are inherently significant in the world of higher education. Changes in our culture, political issues, student needs and expectations, personnel matters, and so much more must be considered by higher education leaders.

These kinds of factors and more challenge higher education leaders to be adaptive yet remain true to the mission and vision of the institution. Keeping these pillars (mission and vision) top of mind is essential for developing strategies for improvement, process enhancements, new learning methods, new ways of doing business, and even the need for changes to institutional culture. *Innovation is a key factor.*

Not only do these types of changes affect senior institutional leaders, but these challenges are also

faced by leaders at mid-level management. The task of balancing their own responsibilities and the tasks assigned to their employees can truly be a juggling act.

At times, it may seem easier to take the attitude of "I can just take care of this myself." Unfortunately, that can only go so far before burnout becomes a concern. In the same fashion, some managers may take the route of assigning the duty to another employee, but find themselves micro-managing the assignment. That can also lead to being overworked and stressed.

A key factor in avoiding this type of stress is to develop trust in the personnel or the team that is assigned to the task.

Allowing staff member(s) to use their skills and competencies, as well as communication that demonstrates your openness and availability to provide any guidance or input they may need, goes a long way. This leadership style will provide opportunities for growth and confidence building, as well as establish a sense of valued input. *Building confidence is a key factor.*

In addition to ensuring the daily tasks are completed, managers must also serve as a motivator

**IN THE MIDST OF ALL THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, LEADERS MUST NOT LOSE THEIR ABILITY TO SERVE AS THE VISIONARIES. THE NEXT STEPS MUST ALWAYS BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THEIR MINDS. HOWEVER, NO LEADER CAN DO IT ALONE. LEADERS MUST HAVE CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN THEIR TEAM TO PERFORM THEIR TASKS.**

for staff members that have become complacent and even physically detached. "Shortages in staffing can be a significant reason for complacency coming into play," said Rebecca Brown, Interim Vice President and CFO at Florida A&M University. "Attrition, decreases in funding that lead to unfilled vacant positions, and even the decreased pool of qualified employment candidates, are causes for these shortages. For this reason, staff members may

feel there is no light at the end of the tunnel as the work load seems to be an unending, daunting task. Managers must be creative in keeping staff members motivated to be productive, yet sensitive enough to have a listening ear to be able to manage with care. *Sensitivity is a key factor.*

In the midst of all their responsibilities, leaders must not lose their ability to serve as the visionaries. The next steps must always be at the forefront of their minds. However, no leader can do it alone. Leaders must have confidence and trust in their team to perform their tasks. The team member must also be confident in the leader and trust that the best interest of the institution is the principal thing. *Trust is a key factor.*

Ultimately, no matter the capacity of leadership, the goal is to make our campus communities better, whether in times of crisis, or in addressing the everyday needs of the ever-changing culture of our world. *Teamwork is a key factor.* ■

1 Ward, S. (2020, September 17). What is Leadership? The Balance Small Business. Retrieved from <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/leadership-definition-2948275>.

**PAMELA L. MOORE** is Marketing and Communications Coordinator at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, FL.



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# Senior Executive Summit:

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As auxiliary services adapt in times of uncertainty, let's let them shine as pillars of student development and success: The ultimate achievement of higher education. If you are a visionary on your campus that brings forward ideas for alternative revenue streams and ways to combat enrollment challenges, attend this year's Senior Executive Summit to help further issues facing the auxiliary services industry as well as shape future content and thought leadership within the Association.

## Discussion Topics include:

- Reimagining the future of the workplace and what your team needs in a supervisor
- Business partners showcasing a campus' core values: Increasing commitment to student employment, JEDI initiatives, sustainability, giving back, and more
- Re-evaluating safety and security plans emerging from a pandemic
- Student employee program assessment standards
- What does it mean to have auxiliaries be disaster resistant?
- Advocating internally for auxiliary services
- Driving alternative revenue sources

For more information or to register, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/shwdrz4j>

# C3X AWARD WINNER FEATURES



## ROBERT F. NEWTON AWARD for Distinguished Service

**DIANE REYNOLDS, MBA, CASP**  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Assistant Vice President, Business Services

The Robert F. Newton Award for Distinguished Service is the most prestigious award recognizing an individual who has displayed extraordinary and outstanding service to NACAS and to the profession.

As one of the first CASP-designated NACAS members (and having served as one of NACAS' earliest Subject Matter Experts), Diane Reynolds is certainly one of the Association's backbones. Her 24 years of being involved in auxiliary services have given her a wonderful perspective on the profession, and she has used her time at NACAS to assist others with their issues, taking the time to listen and learn to find a true way forward. Diane has held many positions at NACAS – among them being the NACAS East President in 2011 before taking the role of NACAS President from 2016 through 2017, then receiving the NACAS East Volunteer of the Year Award in 2020. Her exemplary career has been dedicated to service and support for her campus at VCU and her NACAS family.

## DAVID H. LORD SCHOLARSHIP for Exemplary Community Service

**DAVID C. ATKINS**  
George Mason University, Executive Director of Business Partnerships and Licensing

Auxiliary Services are leaders on our campuses in making a difference in our communities. Community service encourages active citizenship and leadership by students and staff to step up and make the needed changes on our campuses and communities. NACAS Institutions, Members, and Business Partners have an obligation to set the example to make a difference in our world.

In almost 31 years at George Mason University, David Atkins has certainly made that difference. While tending to retail contracts, overseeing marketing for various services, and still finding time to teach an experience course, he and the auxiliary services division partnered with Operation Hat Trick to implement the Hero Box program during Veterans Day 2020. GMU's efforts were a success, positively impacting 75 GMU-affiliated veterans and garnering recognition by OHT in the form of a \$10,000 grant to a local veteran-supporting organization of Mason's choice, the Northern Virginia Veterans Association.







## EDWIN R. GOLDEN AWARD for Inclusive Excellence

### DANESHA ALLEN

University of Houston, Office of Administration

This award was established in 1992 in honor of Edwin R. "Bob" Golden for his foresight in acknowledging the need for attention to issues of cultural diversity in the Association. The purpose of the award is to recognize outstanding campus leadership, activities, and/or programs promoting cultural awareness and inclusion.

DaNesha Allen has supported auxiliary services for three years and has been a member of NACAS for the last two. Her emergent career has seen her supporting the University of Houston's Executive Leadership, and most recently, serving as President-Elect on UH's Staff Council, putting her in a greater position to further inclusivity and promote diversity on her campus. The strides she has taken already – creating a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, hosting workplace conversations about inclusivity, raising voter awareness, and helping UH become a safer place during the pandemic – have enriched and made an indelible mark on her campus. Her forward-thinking leadership continues to impact the University and those around her in positive and encouraging ways.

## SILVER TORCH AWARD

### ROBERT HOLDEN, MPA, CASP

University of Georgia (Retired)

The Silver Torch Award honors an employee of a member institution or Business Partner who retires during the conference year and has served in the profession for ten or more years.

Leaning heavily on the "or more" side is recipient Robert Holden, whose almost 40 years in education have taken from north to south and west to east. After spending 18 years in Food and Nutritional Services in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District in Alaska, he dedicated his next 18 years to auxiliary services at the University of Alaska - Fairbanks, the University of California - San Diego, and the University of Georgia, finishing his career as Associate Vice Chancellor at the University of California - Riverside. Robert retired in 2020 with a lifetime of students, faculty, and staff forever impacted by his tireless work to make their lives better.



## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR (National)

### EMILY MESSA, PHD, CASP

University of Houston, Associate Vice Chancellor and Associate VP for Administration

This award recognizes members who have demonstrated exceptional volunteer work, at the regional and/or national level, that supports the NACAS mission. Nominees for this award should be individuals that have reached out to meet others in the organization, demonstrated exceptional work as a NACAS volunteer, unselfishly worked with others to improve the Association and its mission, and/or performed services or tasks that are not part of their normal assignments.

Both in the U.S. and internationally, Emily Messa has brought her role on the NACAS Board to new heights. Her constant outreach efforts directed at volunteers all over USA and Canada for recruitment and onboarding have yielded excellent results, and her involvement of committee members has provided a new understanding of what NACAS does and how to find success in their endeavors. In addition to presenting at C3X and supplying members with vital information and advice, she regularly involves her University of Houston staff (which includes this year's Edwin R. Golden Award recipient DaNesha Allen) and encourages them to participate in NACAS programs. Emily is always eager to help and regularly contributes her well-earned insights and experience to other members trying to solve campus issues.



# Relationships, Rapport, and Results: **Coaching Star Performers**

BY CHRISTOPHER D. LEE, PH.D., SPHR

The 21st-century relationship between managers and their staff has been redefined and enlightened. The outdated view of the dyad as boss-employee inadvertently holds back performance. The old way of seeing things assumed that employees were not self-motivated, skilled, or willing to show up, deliver great outcomes, and repeat the process every day.

Therefore, supervision was designed as oversight and quality assurance. However, who would get excited about interacting with someone whose primary goal was to “catch them doing something wrong” and correct them? Today’s leaders must be coaches who build rapport and trust with their team members on the way to producing *next-level* results.

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## RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

Relationships between employee and leader matter. Does the employee feel that the leader has their best interest in mind? Is the supervisor there to help the employee get better and feel better about their work, or is the sole focus to direct their effort toward the grindstone? Does the supervisor give constructive criticism or supportive feedback and encouragement? Does the supervisor hold the employee accountable or ask well-placed questions to empower the employee to take ownership and pride in their work? Is correction used as a blunt instrument or as a scalpel designed to diagnose a problem, identify a solution, and jointly put the solution into practice? The former examples are old fashioned supervision, and the latter are examples of good coaching.

The coach's role is to help people perform better than they would alone. It is a partnership. Nearly every employee has the potential to be a star performer if given the right coach. The old metaphor of the manager talking to the whole team and giving directions, being firm but fair, is just that – old. Today, the leader speaks with Susan, Hector, and Paul as individuals. Think of a tennis or golf coach, instead of the soccer or field hockey coach. The leader must have a relationship with each person in order to know them as human beings, as individual people, and as unique performers. Each employee wants and needs something different to perform optimally, but everyone wants to know the leader understands and appreciates them as individuals.

## DARE ONE CARE?

It is not widely understood that leaders must know and care about their subordinates. However, if the leader does not care about the employee, why would the employee care about their leader, their leader's success, or the organization's success? Caring is a two-way street. If there is no emotion, the social contract with the workplace is merely a transaction – an exchange of time or labor for a set dollar rate. However, you cannot pay someone enough to 'care.' And one will not care if they do not feel valued. Many non-exempt employees – such as dining workers, bookstore staff, and parking attendants – report they do not

always feel as appreciated as other professionals in the workplace.

Relationships are built upon trust, caring, respect, and similar emotions. In a word, caring can be a proxy for the overall concept of team spirit. Call it camaraderie, partnership, teamwork, or a common bond. How people feel is as important as what they do. Any friend, family member, or volunteer knows this intuitively. This dynamic also applies to the workplace. Without this element groups are just gaggles, not interconnected and mutually supportive bodies that produce synergistic outcomes. The coach's challenge is to build a high-performing team, one performer at a time.

Rapport is built when two people are in tune. Rapport says, *I am listening to you, I am concerned for you, and I am interested in your success.* There is a relationship with the organization as well. Does the culture value people, or does it perceive hourly employees as disposable, interchangeable parts of a whole? Employees want to feel valued – to feel like they matter. Here again, the relationship is reciprocal. It is hard to be excited about work or an organization if one does not feel appreciated on an individual level. If not, it's just a job, not a source of pride or meaning. The leader must initiate and cultivate a mutually beneficial partnership.

## PERSON/PERFORMER

Every actress, athlete, or artist is the same on the inside as every accountant, architect, or administrative assistant: they are living, breathing people. The leader gets to know their teammates, builds rapport, and learns what makes them tick. Knowing a person's story, their reason for working, their joys and strengths, enable us to serve and support them better. Some employees – performers – need a pat on the back, some need a gentle nudge, and others need someone to metaphorically hold their hand. The emphasis here is that the person and the performer are two sides of the same coin. Wise managers attend to both, providing each person with the tools and support they need to reach their own personal stardom.

## COACH-PERFORMER

The role of the leader in today's workplace is to curate the right mix of empowerment, guidance,

and support that brings out the best in others. Supervisors who encourage staff by checking in frequently to see how they are doing and feeling create invaluable connections. Sports coaches do this, and they are not necessarily known for doing this in a nice way. Quite the opposite – they are known for being tough, no-nonsense, and often hypercritical. However, what makes their poignant feedback acceptable is that coaches have positive intent – they try to help people get better. They demand a lot and want performers to live up to their full potential. They care about their performers as people also, and they cheer them on. Good performance most often follows.

## RELATIONSHIP, RAPPORT & RESULTS

Relationships, rapport, and results might be a recipe for success. Through its culture and employment practices, the organization sends the right messages about how people are to be treated, valued, and respected. These views require supervisors and managers to approach their roles through a coaching lens – supportive, nurturing, caring, and empowering. Coaches enable others to succeed. The leader earns trust by showing genuine care and concern for their employee's growth and success, with working becoming a byproduct of this dynamic, not the sole end. This relationship builds trust, and trust leads to rapport. If the employee is confident the leader is there to help and encourage them, they are more likely to be open and honest. The employee is then empowered to admit mistakes, ask for help, and tell the truth about their shortcomings knowing they will get the support, guidance, and encouragement to perform to their highest potential. No one can become a superstar performer without having a star coach in their corner. ■

CHRISTOPHER D. LEE, PH.D., SPHR, is the Chief Human Resources Officer for William & Mary and the author of four books including *Performance Conversations: How to Use Questions to Coach Employees, Improve Productivity, and Boost Confidence (Without Appraisals)*. This book empowers managers to help employees get, perform, and feel better about their work.



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