NACAS

Strategies for Auxiliaries to Survive and Thrive in the Midst of COVID-19

Crafting a Communications Plan for your Auxiliary Organization

Two Years after COVID-19, Where are We Headed?

SPRING 2022

college services

BUDGETING, BENCHMARKING AND BEST PRACTICES

Enriching the Campus Experience | nacas.org

FIREHOUSE SUBS

Serve What Students Crave

SEAMLESS, HIGH VELOCITY OPERATIONS

DRIVES REPEAT BUSINESS

COMMITTED TO HIGHER EDUCATION

FLEXIBLE FLOORPLANS

ONE-OF-A-KIND COMMITMENT TO LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS

STRONG BRAND IDENTITY

Contact Greg Delks TODAY at

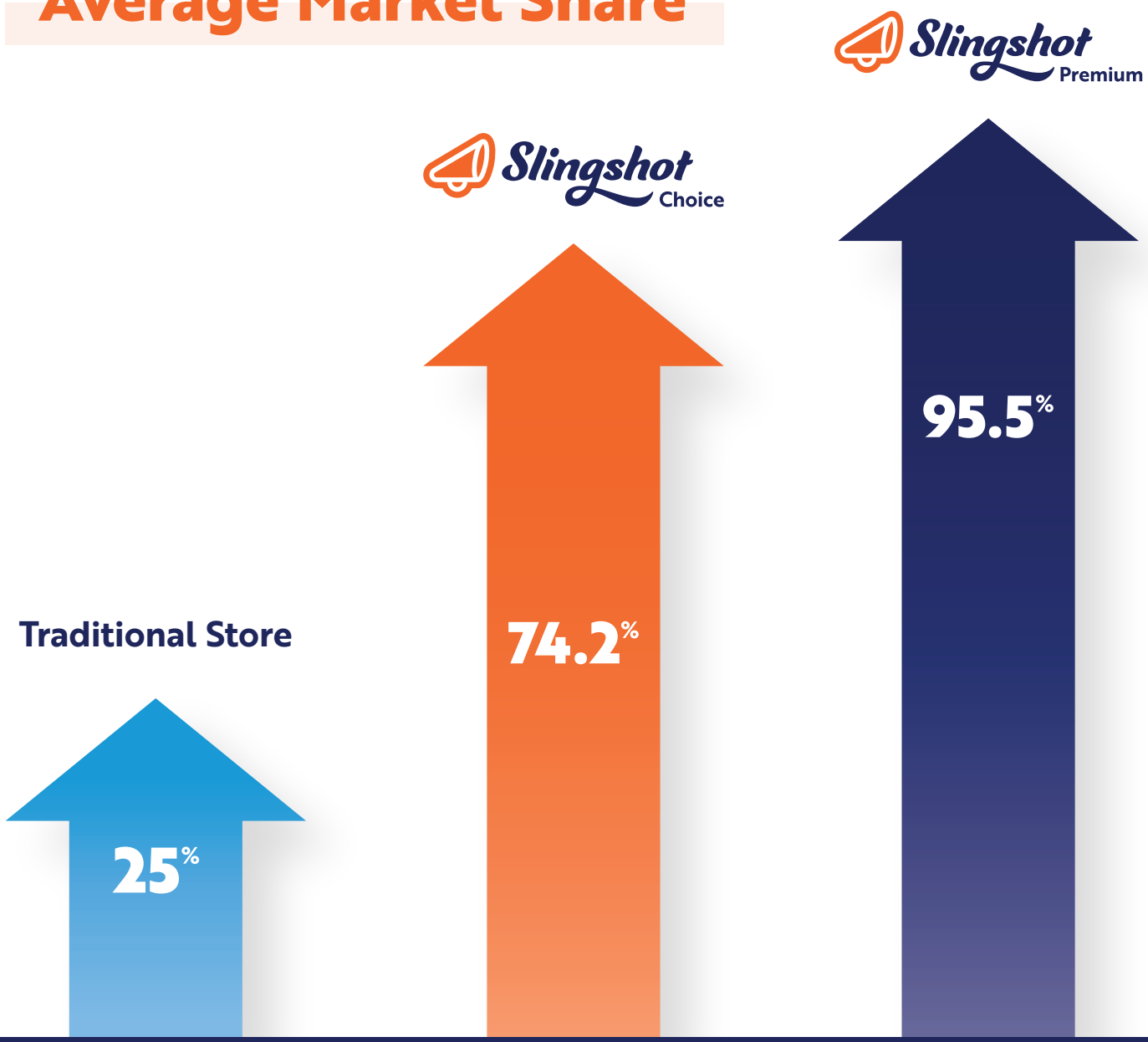
gdelks@firehousesubs.com | (904) 606-5145


Innovation is not only about creation, it's also about redefining where you want to go.
TRANSACT
Integrated Payment Solutions
Campus ID Solutions
Campus Commerce Solutions
Let's begin
TransactCampus.com/nacas

Slingshot

Has your campus store course materials revenue and market share taken a hit in the last few years?

Average Market Share



Learn how to regain your market share with Slingshot.
Contact us at **hello@slingshotedu.com**

college services

features

12

COLLEGE SERVICES

PUBLISHED FOR: **NACAS,** 435 Merchant Walk Sq., Suite 300-139, Charlottesville, VA 22902, Phone: (434) 245-8425, Fax: (434) 245-8453 **www.nacas.org**
PUBLISHED BY: **Naylor, LLC,** 1430 Spring Hill Road, 6th Floor, McLean, VA 22102 Phone: (800) 369-6220 **www.naylor.com**
ACCOUNT MANAGER David Freeman **EDITOR** Antonya English **MARKETING** Marisa Abbott **PROJECT MANAGER** Krys Whildin
SALES DIRECTOR Nicholas Manis **PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR** Paige Durban **ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES** Jacqueline McIllwain, Megan Stanley
LAYOUT & DESIGN Deb Churchill | Print 2.0h! **COVER PHOTO CREDIT:** MEKANIC
PUBLISHED MARCH 2022/JIL-Q0122/1135

opening remarks
Presidential Perspective

Hoping for a Resilient 2022

MATTHEW PORTNER, EJD, MEd, CASP
NACAS PRESIDENT

My friends, here's to a resilience in 2022.

I have seen some bad golfers over the years, but can a golf swing be so bad as to cause structural damage to the golfer's own arm? Doubtful. Nevertheless, somewhere in the summer of 2021, I acquired a substantial tear in the extensor tendon in my left arm. That was my *reality.* I had to shut down golf for the season and have surgery.

I love playing golf, so taking my clubs out of the car was a real symbolic act. A recognition that this was going to be a winter like no other. However, I *expected* that everyone would do their best: the doctors, the nurses, and me. I *expect*ed that early in 2022 I would begin testing, training, and working my newly constructed elbow. I *expect*ed that I would work hard and that by March-April, I would be chasing the little white ball again.

Challenges don't present themselves when they are convenient. Things happen; that's all they'll ever do. But that can't be the end of the story. It is just the beginning. Adversity and being uncomfortable (even in feeling some pain) are important for growth. One aspect of growth is demonstrating *resilience*.

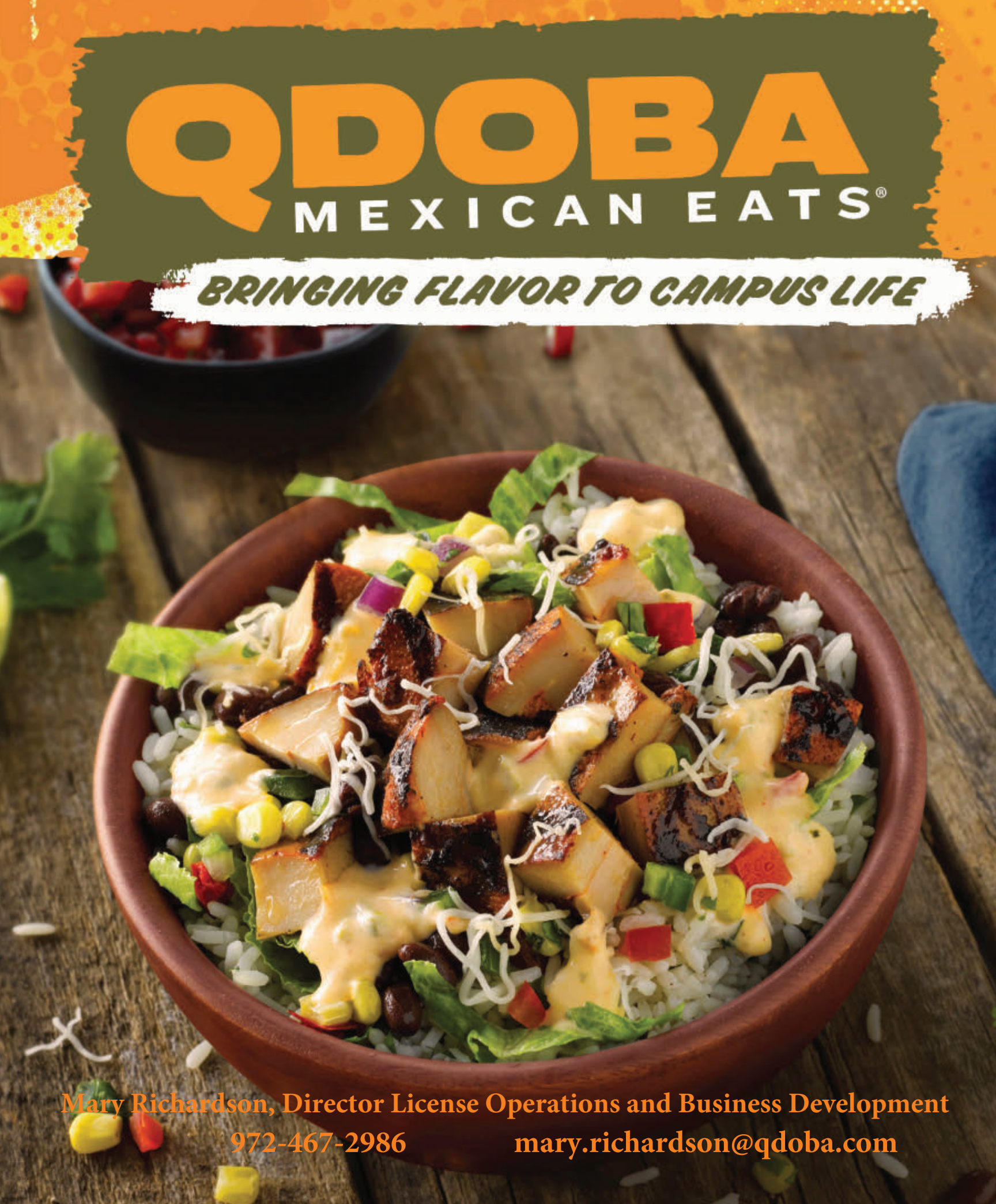
Resilience is recognizing our *reality.* It is understanding that we need to heal and to work through what is difficult. It is knowing that elbow grease (pun intended), time, constructive thought, and persistence are all part of the plan. Resilience is then working the plan.

Here is the plan that is working for me. It applies to all kinds of adversity and opportunity.

1. Identify the reality. Be self-aware and honest.
2. What do you expect to happen?
3. What is your plan to make it happen?
4. Expect a positive result.

I see this outline played out in Auxiliary Services. I know that none of us would still be here if we didn't care about our operations, our teams, and the students that we impact. Things will happen. Undoubtedly, this too will be a year like no other. Know that you are not alone or the first person to be faced with adversity. Be aware and be accountable. Plan, then do the work. If you fail or your plan doesn't work, go back to step one. With a new reality, adapt and keep moving forward.

As for me, I *expect* to be teeing it up for the first time in 2022 at the NACAS South Regional CX in Savannah, Georgia (April 10-13). So, if you need a playing partner or you just want to see how this story turns out, I will see you there. ■



Mary Richardson, Director License Operations and Business Development
972-467-2986 mary.richardson@qdoba.com

Walking the Tightrope Between Recouping and Flourishing

ISTOCK.COM/WOLKA08

THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 HAS AUXILIARIES LEADERS SEARCHING FOR NEW STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP BUDGETS AND CREATE SAVINGS WHILE STILL MAXIMIZING SERVICES TO STUDENTS.

BY VICTORIA LIM

While the process of developing a budget hasn't changed, the pandemic has affected the strategy and logic some universities are using to determine their budgets. Not surprisingly, the significant and sudden drop in typical revenue generators during the height of COVID-19 affected areas including housing, food services, parking, conferences, and bookstores, forcing pivots and adjustments.

At the University of British Columbia (UBC), its fully self-supporting ancillary and business operations generated a total revenue of $235 million before COVID and contributed $22 million to the university's central budget.

"The financial impact of COVID on all ancillary units was significant and, as a result, Student Housing and Community Services' typical profit of approximately $25 million quickly turned into a collective loss of about $60 million in fiscal 2020-21," said Andrew Parr, UBC's Associate Vice President of Student Housing and Community Services. "We are currently in Q4 of fiscal 2021-22 and while business volume and cost mitigation has improved, the unit's financial performance we are projecting to realize a net loss for this fiscal year."

The numbers may differ but the experiences and reactions at auxiliary services across institutions are similar. Restoration and conservation are the immediate needs.

"At the moment, we are focused on financial recovery and replenishing savings that were depleted during fiscal years 2020 and 2021," said Dr. Emily Messa, CASP, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Associate Vice President for Administration for the University of Houston (UH).

"The auxiliary needs to remain healthy while maximizing service and financial contribution to the campus. I think the pandemic has reinforced the need for savings and reserves," added Neil Markley, Associate Vice President of Administration and Finance for Sonoma State University (SSU).

Leveraging the significant differences from 2018 to 2021, UBC, UH, and SSU are incorporating the performance of the last three years as well as other factors such as industry trends and projected enrollments in approaching their budgets.

Markley said he prefers base budgeting, so as not to force the department or division to recreate its budget each year. He considers the previous year's budget performance, progress toward goals, mandatory cost augmentations and future budgeting realities. For example, are cuts on the horizon?

"For this current budget year, (UH) Auxiliary Enterprises used a strategy of budgeting revenues and expenses at 80% of FY2019, which was a conservative approach and reflected the projected Housing occupancy at the time," said Messa. "Subsequently, for the upcoming budget year FY2023, we are using a blended average of the three combined pre-COVID years to develop our revenue and expense budgets."

This conservative approach has led to a relatively faster recovery. Because of strategic cuts in non-revenue generating services, UH anticipates it will be able to start reinvesting in capital renewal accounts and new investments for products and services, with caution.

As schools look forward to increasing enrollments, there's no expectation it will automatically translate to an expansion of their spending.

"It's not about an increase in spending. It's about generating incremental revenue from a growing study body and managing our costs in a way that also increases our ability to produce net income," Parr said. "This income, for the most part, goes back to the university in the form of a dividend after all costs are recovered."

"More often than not, much of the increase may go into expansion or creation of other programs; an increase in reserves; or a larger campus contribution," Markley said.

Now two years into a global pandemic, auxiliary services are walking the tightrope between recouping and flourishing.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (UBC), ITS FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING ANCILLARY AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS GENERATED A TOTAL REVENUE OF $235 MILLION BEFORE COVID AND CONTRIBUTED $22 MILLION TO THE UNIVERSITY'S CENTRAL BUDGET.

ISTOCK.COM/JIRAPONG MANUSTRONG

"THE AUXILIARY NEEDS TO REMAIN HEALTHY WHILE MAXIMIZING SERVICE AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CAMPUS. I THINK THE PANDEMIC HAS REINFORCED THE NEED FOR SAVINGS AND RESERVES." – NEIL MARKLEY, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE FOR SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

"We have built realistic plans to continue to serve the campus community in positive ways (thereby enhancing the student and broader community experience) and to do so in a fiscally prudent way," Parr said. "COVID gave us a chance to re-think and re-focus our operations on services that meet the community needs, cover all costs of operation and return to providing a contribution to the central university budget (A.K.A. net income)."

While student housing and residence dining have been operating at 100% capacity since September of last year, other operational changes at UBC are addressing the reduced needs for some traditional services in some traditional ways. For example, conference centers and accommodations may take an estimated three to five years to return to pre-COVID rates because of reduced business travel, so UBC is looking to attract tourists. The school offered free parking during the peak, plummeting revenues to almost nothing. It is now promoting alternative and more sustainable forms of transportation. Meeting the changing needs of its customers, the school is offering more online and digital services for food and the bookstore, as opposed to relying on retail locations and catering.

Messa said similarly UH enhanced contactless service offerings with minimal expense. She recommends this type of cost saving and forward-thinking approach as auxiliary professionals form and evaluate their budgets.

"Being conservative in our expectations made it easier to meet our targets and also forced us to take a hard look at recurring expenses," she said. "Being more conservative in our estimates also relieved pressure for departmental leaders. The environment we were operating in was very fluid and as we are an auxiliary, we needed to set budget expectations early. Being cautious and having budget strategies developed early made it possible for the leadership to make key financial decisions that we are now benefiting from."

"The unknowns of the future make budgeting more difficult," Parr added. "Our budget, like most ancillaries (auxiliaries) budgets, are revenue generating budgets. We anticipate operational changes (new revenue opportunities, expense changes, capital investment requirements) from one year to the next; this ultimately formulates our annual and five-year budget plans."

Regardless of a worldwide health crisis or windfall of new students, Markley's advice is consistent:

"Always meet your budget." ■

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.

Self-Operating Your College Store:

The Smarter Choice (Now, More Than Ever)

The Independent College Bookstore Association (ICBA) was founded in 1927 to support the independent operation of college stores.

Today, ICBA's 223 college store Members in the U.S. and Canada are driven by a core mission to serve their institutions and students, rather than deliver profits to a corporate entity.

ICBA Members have aggregate sales of $1.4B and all profits stay on campus. ICBA negotiates "preferred terms" on behalf of our Members with over 60 top suppliers to ensure financial success for the campus and to ensure competitive pricing for campus customers.

ICBA Member Stores are part of the fabric of their institutions and are best suited to reflect the uniqueness, traditions, and values of each campus- you won't be subject to "cookie cutter" product assortments and pricing directives developed at a national headquarters.

Email: JonBibo@ICBAinc.com

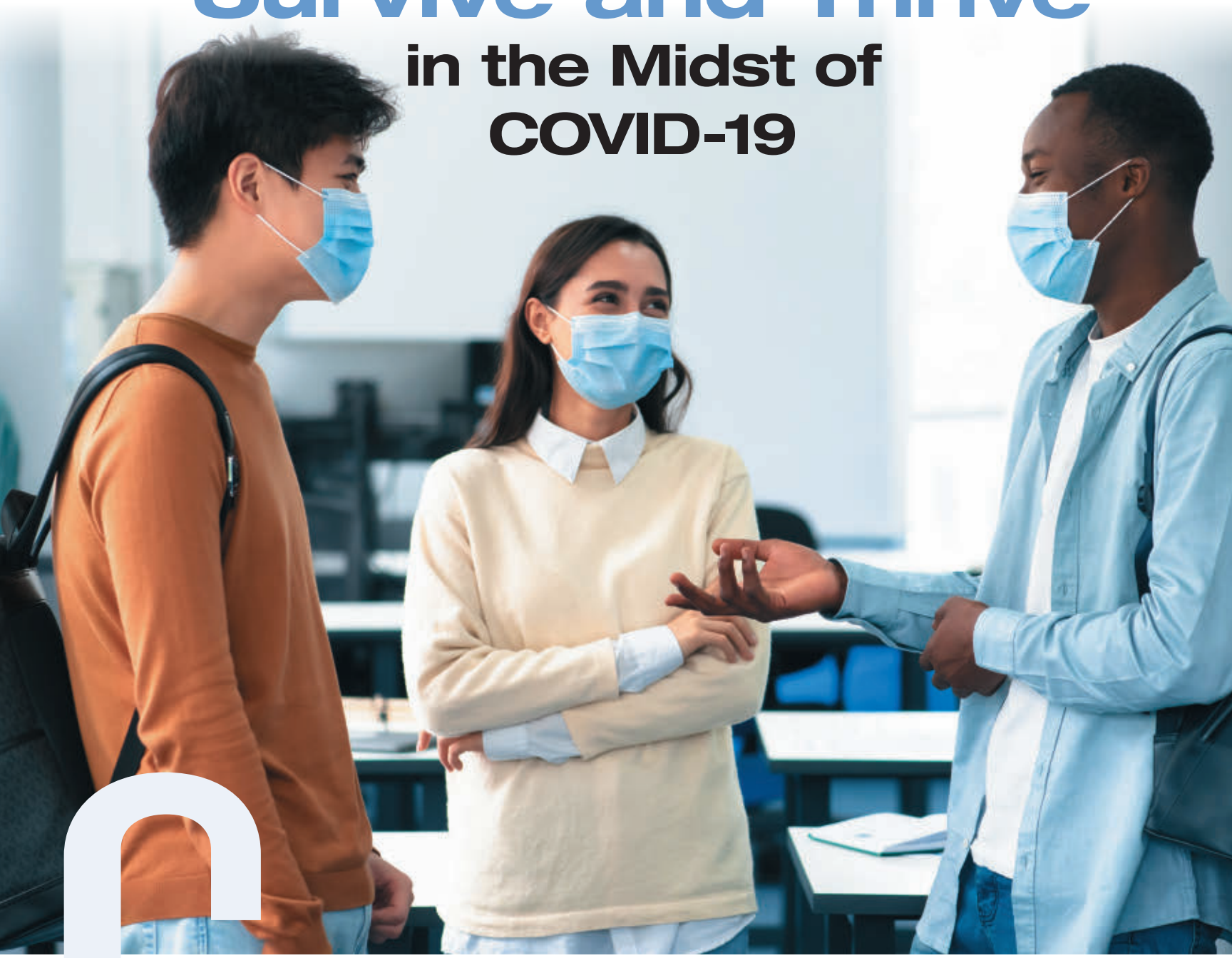
ICBA Member Stores serve the following institutions:

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
Alvin Community College
Appalachian State University
Ashland University
Auburn University
Auburn University at Montgomery
Augustana College
Azusa Pacific University
Belmont University
Bismarck State College
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
Boise State University
Brigham Young University
Brigham Young University - Idaho Brown University
Butte-Glenn Community College District California
Polytechnic University - Pomona
California State University - Fullerton/Long Beach
Carroll College
Cedarville University
Central Michigan University
Central Washington University
Centralia College
Chaffey College
Chemeketa Community College
Clark College
Clark State Community College
Clark University
Coker University
Colgate University
College of Lake County
College of Southern Idaho
College of Wooster
Colorado Mesa University
Colorado State University
Columbus State Community College
Cornell University
Crowder College
Dakota State University
Dalhousie University
Davidson College
Dordt University
Duke University
Duquesne University
Eastern Washington University
Edgewood College
El Camino College
Elgin Community College
Evergreen State College
Ferris State University
Flagler College
Florida International University
Fort Hays State University
Franciscan University of Steubenville
Frostburg State University
Georgia Southern University
Grand Canyon University
Grand Valley State University - Allendale
Grand View University
Grinnell College
Gustavus Adolphus College
Hampden-Sydney College
Harrisburg Area Community College
Highline College
Hillsdale College
Hutchinson Community College
Illinois Central College
Illinois State University
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Iowa State University
Johnson County Community College
Joliet Junior College
Kansas City Kansas Community College
Kennesaw State University
Kilgore College
Kirkwood Community College
Kishwaukee College
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Lafayette College
Lake Region State College
Lorain County Community College
Los Angeles City College
Los Angeles Mission College
Los Angeles Southwest College Store
Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
Los Angeles Valley College
Los Medanos College
Mars Hill University
McGill University
McHenry County College
McMaster University
Miami University
Michigan Technological University
Millersville University
Minnesota State University - Mankato/Moorhead
Missouri State University
Modesto Junior College
Monmouth University
Monroe Community College
Montana State University - Billings/Bozeman
Montana Technological University
Normandale Community College
North Carolina State University
North Carolina Wesleyan College
North Dakota State College of Science
North Dakota State University
Northern Oklahoma College
Northwest Nazarene University
Occidental College
Ogden Weber Technical College
Oklahoma State University
Oregon State University
Ozarks Technical Community College
Palmer College of Chiropractic
Parkland College
Pierce College
Portland Community College
Queen's University
Reed College
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Rutgers University
Ryerson University
Salisbury University
San Diego State University
San Joaquin Delta College Santa Barbara City College
Santa Monica College
Schoolcraft College
Seward County Community College
Skyline College
Snow College
Southeast Community College
Southern Utah University
Spartanburg Community College
St. Catherine University - St. Paul
St. Charles Community College
St. Mary's University
Stark State College
State Fair Community College
State Technical College of Missouri
State University of New York - Potsdam
Syracuse University
Texas State Technical College
The King's University
Three Rivers College
Umpqua Community College
Union College
United States Military Academy
United States Naval Academy
University of Alabama
University of Arizona
University of Calgary
University of California - Davis /Los Angeles/San Diego/ Santa Barbara /Santa Cruz
University of Central Missouri
University of Colorado - Boulder/Colorado Springs
University of Dayton
University of Guelph
University of Hawai'i Mānoa
University of Illinois at Champaign - Urbana
University of Kansas
University of Maine - Orono
University of Mary
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
University of Maryland - Baltimore County
University of Massachusetts
University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota - Duluth
University of Missouri - Columbia
University of Nebraska - Omaha
University of New Mexico
University of Northern Iowa
University of Northwestern - St. Paul
University of Oregon
University of Pittsburgh
University of Puget Sound
University of Richmond
University of Rochester
University of San Diego
University of St. Thomas
University of Tennessee
University of Texas at Austin
University of Utah
University of Vermont
University of Victoria
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of West Georgia
University of Windsor
University of Wisconsin - Madison/ Oshkosh/ Whitewater
University of Wyoming
Utah State University
Utah Valley University
Victor Valley College
Wabash College
Wartburg College
Washburn University
Waukesha County Technical College
Wayland Baptist University
Weber State University
Wesleyan University
West Chester University of Pennsylvania
West Los Angeles College
Western Oregon University
Western University of Health Sciences
Western Washington University
Whatcom Community College
Wichita State University
York University

"Strong. Successful. Independent. Together."

www.icbainc.com

Strategies for Auxiliaries to Survive and Thrive in the Midst of COVID-19



BY JEFFREY PITTMAN, PH.D.

Colleges and universities have experienced two years of significant adjustments due to COVID-19. Challenges have been in abundance for higher education – the shift to primarily online education, enhanced safety measures for faculty, staff, and students, and enrollment declines on many campuses. The resulting financial devastation caused by pandemic induced issues has reduced tuition revenue and in large part decimated auxiliary revenue. With a traditional focus primarily on campus goods and services, auxiliaries are poorly positioned to serve a campus community that is no longer on campus.

DYNAMIC TIMES AND IMPACTS

Without question, we are living in dynamic, changing times. From life and work experiences, we can all attest that change brings challenge for sure, but it also provides opportunities, especially for entrepreneurship and innovation. These two illustrative words exemplify auxiliary leaders. The pandemic has caused enrollment declines nationwide. Indeed, demographic trends indicate that the traditional aged college population is and will be in dramatic decline for at least the

ISTOCK.COM/PRO-STOCK STUDIO

WE ARE CLEARLY NO LONGER IN A TIME WHEN DOING THE SAME OLD THING IS GOING TO ADDRESS STUDENT NEEDS, CAMPUS NEEDS, OR AUXILIARY UNIT SUCCESS.

next several years due to reduced national birth rates in the early 2000's. The pandemic certainly caused an overwhelming shift from on-campus to online study, which hits at the very heart of most campus service and auxiliary operations. Food service, c-stores, and other retail ventures have seen the greatest impact. Bookstores have also been impacted based on the stores' technical and operational agility in accepting and handling online orders.

Along with the pandemic and demographic decline in potential students, course work went online in March 2020 and, with some exceptions, has remained in force due to COVID-19 and its various variants that continue to evolve. In the traditional auxiliary operating model of multitudes of on-campus students and employees, online students do not make optimal customers. College executives have been forced to make rapid decisions concerning on-campus instruction and programs, resulting in institutional financial losses. Auxiliary leaders have faced these same issues with perhaps even more devastating results for their units. In addition to serious business outcomes, the pandemic has also helped create an overwhelming impact on the mental health and stress management abilities of students and staff, which is ongoing. These health and mental health issues are likely to continue for years to come.

OPPORTUNITIES AND INNOVATION

Even with the litany of noted challenges and the hard decisions they have created, along with these challenges and changes opportunities arise. Higher learning has increasingly moved online since 2020. While disrupting on campus courses, this instructional model provides a favorable environment for a more diverse student body. Older, working adults often thrive in online programs as online courses offer the ability to study while remaining in full-time jobs and not being compelled to relocate to a geographically distant, physical campus. Almost universally, students express their appreciation for being able to complete coursework asynchronously and in a location of their choosing. Adult students typically have greater income than 18-24-year-olds and are more intentional in reaching out for goods and services they deem important. While online students are not the traditional or typical consumer of campus auxiliary services, these students also need to have their needs met by the colleges they attend.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO HELP AUXILIARIES THRIVE

Auxiliary leaders should adopt at least three strategies to enhance potential future success: consumer focus, proactive communication, and cross-campus and business partner collaboration. Here are some thoughts on how to make these strategies work for you, your students, and your college or university.

1. Consumer Focus

When things are going well, all of us have the tendency to let things continue as they have. The phrase "why change what's working" comes to mind. Well, we are clearly no longer in a time when doing the same old thing is going to address student needs, campus needs, or auxiliary unit success. College administrators and particularly auxiliary leaders need to remember what has made auxiliaries successful over recent decades. This refocusing should include refreshing our understanding of today's students and gathering sufficient information to understand who they are, what they need and what they want to support their academic success, personal convenience, and enhance their personal and professional development beyond the classroom. Campus services professionals need to re-embrace the entrepreneurship and eye for innovation that has been the hallmark of auxiliary and campus services for decades. A campus norm has been for presidents and vice presidents to call on auxiliary leaders to take on new initiatives and to do the things that have never been done at their college. Typically, auxiliaries employ the people who can get 'it' done – whatever that 'it' might be. Operating sporting event concessions, airports, golf courses, constructing facilities, and bolstering campus life in a myriad of ways comes to mind. Survey students and conduct focus groups with online and on-campus students alike to find out what they are looking for and find

Your 24/7 digital access

Stay informed with industry information and association news.

WWW.COLLEGESERVICESMAG-DIGITAL.COM

JACOB LUND/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

HIGHER ED AND AUXILIARIES ARE CHALLENGED, BUT CHALLENGES BRING INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY!

ways for your campus to provide these services. In short, stop thinking about past successes and take on the nimbleness to adapt to the needs of contemporary students and times.

2. Proactive Communication

While being a good communicator is a critical skill for everyone in a principally service economy, the turmoil created by COVID-19 necessitates a stepped-up emphasis on proactive communication. Figuring out what students' desire is, of course, essential and should be step one. This effort should also include conveying appropriate and timely information to students, the broader college community, as well as alumni. Certainly, traditional modes of campus-wide interaction should occur. In addition, social media platforms should be utilized to the fullest extent and advantage possible. Being informed and engaged with all students and constituent groups sends the message that auxiliaries are not only interested, but also actively engaged in comprehensively supporting both essential and desired student services.

3. Embrace Cross Division and Constituent Collaboration

The chaos of recent months has likely pushed many college employees back into the silo organizational model higher learning had been moving away from in recent years. Now is the time to reach out to other divisions – academic affairs, advancement, business affairs, and student affairs to find ways to support their efforts to retain students and enhance the institutional image. While doing this, there will undoubtedly be new ideas and initiatives ideally geared for auxiliary involvement and success. Simultaneously, continue to find appropriate ways to work with business partners to achieve campus and auxiliary service benefits as well as helping to reach business partner goals. With this level of collaboration, new revenue generating initiatives will undoubtedly come to light. The key here is to actively engage across campus and beyond to help discover needs and potential new initiatives that can aid campus services and better support students.

Recommit and Revision Auxiliaries' Traditional Strengths

By adopting a renewed emphasis on a consumer focus, proactive communication, and intentional collaboration, auxiliary units build a framework for strategically moving into the future. As the higher education world continues to adapt, evolve, and reframe as a result of COVID-19 and other societal factors, auxiliary units will be positioned to thrive in the days ahead. This success can occur through a recommitment to consumers, communication, and collaboration and continuing to innovatively serve and support students and the colleges they attend. ■

JEFFREY PITTMAN, PH.D., is an Associate Professor in Regent University's School of Education and former Vice President for Student Services at Regent. Pittman directs the master's in student affairs and doctoral program in higher education leadership and management. He is also a NACAS past president.

Crafting a Communications Plan for your Auxiliary Organization

BY COLIN WYLIE

Developing a clear and concise strategy for communications and marketing is critical to the success of an auxiliary organization. Throughout my time in student affairs and with an academic department/college, I have seen how poor communications can lead to big problems. The individual success of a student is directly impacted by the way they receive and interpret communication.

Each organization has varying needs and are often met with budgetary restrictions. There is no "one size fits all" approach for how you plan and carry out a communications plan. You may have a team of professionals, a group of student employees, or a combination of both. More often in our industry, you'll see one or two individuals with an insurmountable task ahead of them. Those folks may also be wearing several hats and the marketing one is usually on fire or the least worn in the closet. No matter your situation, you can be successful.

FIRST WHO, THEN WHAT

In his #1 bestseller book, "Good to Great," author Jim Collins developed a concept that refers to "getting the right people on the bus." He suggests that "those who build great organizations make sure they have the right people on the bus and the right people in the key seats before they figure out where to drive the bus."[1]

The individual or team that creates your communication strategies should be able to build relationships with others and think big picture. They should be directly involved, or at least have a direct line of communication with, the leadership of an organization. When decisions are made, your communicators should be right there. Doing so will streamline solutions and create synergy within your organization.

The "who" of your plan might also include other people on campus you can collaborate with. Finding others with complimentary skills or industry knowledge can be extremely helpful when you are trying to solve problems.

SET MEANINGFUL GOALS

Perhaps this goes without saying, but clear and meaningful goals will help you determine your direction. I'm sure most of us have been in a leadership training that brought up the principle of SMART goals (as in goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely). Without trying to be too cliché, using this approach

ISTOCK.COM/OLIVIER LE MOAL

will help you think holistically and give you goals that truly matter.

CREATING SPACE FOR STUDENT INPUT

The nature of higher education suggests that students will always be a primary or secondary audience. As you create a strategy to communicate with students, it's important to have input from students. Best case scenario is that you could have some student employees or paid interns that could help develop messaging (a great professional development opportunity). This *does not* mean the student runs your social media account. If a paid or work-study set-up doesn't work, you might utilize traditional research or assessment methods such as focus groups, surveys or one-on-one interviews.

YOUR FIRST STEP IS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF YOUR CURRENT OR FUTURE AUDIENCES. ASK YOURSELF A FEW QUESTIONS: IS OUR MARKETING ACCESSIBLE BY ALL?

I've found that my students help guide our messaging to better reach their peers. They will often pose questions and scenarios that help guide the way we market programs or services. They are also often more aware of societal trends that you could utilize to your advantage, and on a regular basis, tell me when my ideas aren't "cool" or "hip."

UNDERSTAND THE TOOLS IN YOUR BELT

The communications world, especially surrounding digital, is changing constantly. New platforms and channels emerge, and marketing teams become overwhelmed trying to keep up with it. As you begin to develop an understanding of how your audiences consume information, you can better understand how to get messages in front of them. Understanding how each channel functions will help you get a better idea of whether it's worth the investment of time, money and effort.

I'll use our new "friend" TikTok as an example. The app has seen exponential growth in the past three years and is projected to overtake Instagram with active users this year.[2] One of its main audiences happens to be a traditional college-aged student. You have probably already created an account (or have been toying with the idea). Let's pause to understand the tool before we determine if it's right to use. The default feed when you open the app is the "for you page," an unending collection of content that is displayed based on user activity and behavior. A user might scroll for minutes before they see a video that was shared from an account they actually follow. If you're trying to promote a dining special on campus or share parking information, it's possible that your message will be seen more by folks across the world than the ones living on campus. While I'm not attempting to dissuade you from using TikTok, when you have a better understanding of how certain communication channels function, it may help you make informed decisions about your strategy.

A final note on this—each platform will require a large amount of time commitment and skills to create engaging content. If you don't have access to someone with skills as a videographer, you may not want to try using a video-first platform. Do an inventory of your personnel to determine how to match skillsets with your communication channels.

SAFE SPACES FOR ALL

Your efforts to create a safe and inclusive environment should be at the top of your priority list. Marketing and communications don't get a pass on this, but is in fact often where much of this work takes place. Your first step is to fully understand the needs of your current or future audiences. Ask yourself a few questions: Is our marketing accessible by all? Are we utilizing a variety of communication channels that speak to people with different backgrounds or communication styles? Is our language inclusive for people with different identities or disabilities? It is helpful to do a regular inventory of your practices and compare them with industry best practices.

ASSESSING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation component is critical in understanding whether or not your strategy (or specific tactics) are working. I'll say it once, but it may be helpful to re-read this statement: don't just do something because it's tradition. If you can't show the value in one of your communication strategies, it may be time to try something new. I have found that regularly assessing what we are doing has helped us pause and hit the reset button. Innovation and creativity will often lead to bad ideas—and that's okay! Success will come by consistently seeking for growth and improvement. ■

1https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/first-who-then-what.html

2https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/new-report-suggests-tiktok-will-surpass-15-billion-users-in-2022/610018/

COLIN WYLIE is the Communications Manager at Reeve Memorial Union, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Brigham Young University in Utah. He is serving on the board of directors for PRSA Northeast Wisconsin and the NACAS Communications Service Committee. Colin has worked in higher education, healthcare and the nonprofit industry.

ISTOCK.COM/CAGKANSAYIN

Two Years after COVID-19, Where are We Headed?

BY ROBERT HOLDEN, MPA, CASP

New day, new issues with age old problems.

With today's marketplace, staffing issues are widespread. It can be seen in every business, university, school, and organization. The pandemic has changed the game—or has it? Yes, we are seeing shifts in workforces and yes, we are experiencing staffing shortages. The issues are compounded by the pandemic; there is a fear for some to go to work, but there is also a burnout factor for those that are working.

Programs experienced rapid changes at the beginning of the pandemic, followed by clouded direction from every angle. Those rapid changes, often multiple times a week or even multiple times a day at the beginning have left concern and doubt in the minds of our staff. Prior to the COVID outbreak, most teams had a general idea of the direction the program was headed, then came the unknown. Rapidly programs shifted, others were shuttered, and work began to find new ways to respond to the spread of COVID. Rapid changes were necessary but lacked communication and involvement in the process.

Two years in and still a cloud around where we are headed. Our teams, the people we relied on for

PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THEY ARE APPRECIATED, THEY NEED GOOD DIRECTION AND NEED TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO INVEST IN THEM. APPRECIATION IS MORE THAN WALKING BY AND SAYING, "GOOD JOB", THAT'S NICE TO HEAR, BUT DOESN'T REALLY COVER THE VOIDS THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED. LOOK FOR THE "HOW" – HOW DOES THIS PERSON KNOW THEY ARE APPRECIATED?

years, are feeling burned out and overworked, covering for roles they thought they had long left behind. So, what is the impact? We see people that stepped up, knowing they were needed, filling roles both above and below their hired role. In some cases, they are covering for the positions lost due to cutbacks and in some cases, they are covering for positions that just can't be filled.

So where do we turn? How can we regain the draw that our positions once held? The draw we used to know (benefits, leave, holidays) are now diminished by the workload. People are leaving good positions with benefits for lesser positions paying competitive wages. Less stress, same take home. I've talked with campuses, industry and businesses; people are burned out. This is probably not a surprise for those reading this article, after all you must deal with the shortages every day.

Where do we go from here? Let's rewind to issues that occurred before COVID, staffing issues aren't new they are just exacerbated with the current state. It's always good to return to basics, people need to know they are appreciated, they need good direction and need to know that you are willing to invest in them. Appreciation is more than walking by and saying, "good job", that's nice to hear, but doesn't really cover the voids that have been created. Look for the "how" – how does this person know they are appreciated? For some that may be a bonus, or an extra day off, for others it may be a promotion, but we need to spend the time on understanding what is important to the individual.

Think back to how you came into the position you are in. You probably thought about being a "team player" and stepped in to help when asked. That isn't a bad trait, but how long are you willing to step in and "help out?" In a previous position I was happy to help, taking on new roles, expecting to be recognized for what I was doing. That was good and I received comments like "good job." I inherited seven different full-time positions along with "good job" and we can't fill those other positions right now. In the end, I moved on with a better role somewhere else where they treated me better. With the pandemic, this is happening, and people are leaving. They are tired of covering for multiple positions with little more than a "good job" and no end in sight.

You won't just lose the person that is burned out, you lose the prospects that they brought in as you recruit for those open positions. If people are leaving because they are unhappy and overworked, you can guarantee that they are also telling people why they left. Good recruiting is strongly benefitted when your current teams are happy.

It's not too late to course correct. Use your networks to discover how others are finding new ways for retention and pulling in new recruits. Now is the time to provide a clear vision for the organization, one that is inclusive and looks forward. Pull your team out of the "weeds" of tasks that overwhelm them every day with the vision of where they are headed. Use this time to talk with your teams about their future and get their thoughts on the organizations future to design a vision that they are interested in following. Invest in the people you have, listen to their ideas, and give them the ability to make changes to enhance the future of your programs.

Empower, inspire, and mentor your teams. ■

ROBERT HOLDEN, MPA, CASP, is Associate Vice President, Retired, University of Georgia.

ISTOCK.COM/CECILLE_ARCURS

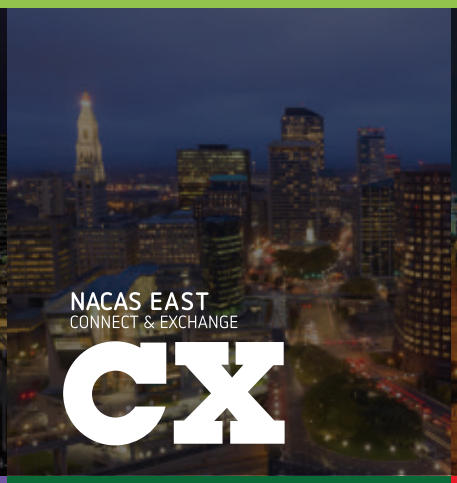
YOU WON'T JUST LOSE THE PERSON THAT IS BURNED OUT, YOU LOSE THE PROSPECTS THAT THEY BROUGHT IN AS YOU RECRUIT FOR THOSE OPEN POSITIONS. IF PEOPLE ARE LEAVING BECAUSE THEY ARE UNHAPPY AND OVERWORKED, YOU CAN GUARANTEE THAT THEY ARE ALSO TELLING PEOPLE WHY THEY LEFT. GOOD RECRUITING IS STRONGLY BENEFITTED WHEN YOUR CURRENT TEAMS ARE HAPPY.

2022 ANNUAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

CONNECT WITH YOUR REGION IN PERSON THIS SPRING

SAVANNAH
April 10-13

SAN DIEGO
June 6-8



HARTFORD
June 8-10

CINCINNATI
June 12-15

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

nacas.org

NACAS
ENRICHING THE CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

BUILDING ON A COMMITMENT TO FOCUS ON WHAT NACAS MEMBERS NEED MOST

We are now well into 2022 and I am energized after returning from meetings in Austin, TX with some of our volunteer leadership including the NACAS Board of Directors, Foundation Board, committee chairs, and regional leaders. The focus of this year's leadership team meeting was around the development of our new strategic plan and better understanding our members' needs to sustain NACAS well into the future. Over 200 institutional members helped us in providing feedback via our recent member survey to inform discussions around member value, prioritization, and our programs and services. The feedback we received is consistent and whether in-person or online, we know that you find the greatest value from the education and networking opportunities provided by NACAS and we are fully committed to expanding on these programs for you and your team members. As we finalize our new strategic plan, we will be prioritizing the focus of what's most important for our members and to be the resource and community that enables you to thrive in your career and make the greatest impact on student success.

Another exciting outcome from our recent leadership meetings is a new vision and mission for the NACAS Foundation:

Vision: We envision a future where all students can be successful.

Mission: The NACAS Foundation exists to support the philanthropic goals of NACAS.

We will accomplish this by:

- *Funding grants, research, and programs to support student success*
- *Supporting the growth and development of Auxiliary leaders*

I applaud the work of our Foundation Board leaders on focusing our future direction towards this new vision.

I am hearing some incredible stories from auxiliary leaders across the country about how you and your teams are managing through today's unprecedented challenges, including supply chain issues, that are impacting all operational areas. In this issue of *College Services* magazine we'll explore some of the creative solutions that NACAS members are implementing, as well as general auxiliary best practices, including marketing considerations for digital accessibility. Recently, I had the privilege of joining a group of auxiliary leaders and business partners for this year's (sold-out) Senior Executive Summit in Palm Springs, where we will hear from thought-provoking speakers on topics like emerging technology and disaster resilience in higher education, and engage in solutions-focused roundtable discussions and rich networking amongst attendees and business partners. Although this is an intimate program, we look forward to sharing some of the major highlights and takeaways with the broader NACAS community. Be sure to look out for more great programming like this in the future.

Each year we ask our outgoing NACAS board members for feedback about their volunteer experience. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank NACAS Past President, Ryan Greene, and outgoing board member, Maria Hoagland, for their service to the NACAS community. One of the insights that we asked them to share is their best piece of advice to the membership and I would be remiss in not sharing their thoughts with you.

"Stay engaged with NACAS and volunteer! It makes your experience much better and allows you to meet and network with so many great people across our shared industry."

– Ryan Greene

"Get involved! When you get involved, you will get so much more out of your membership than you had ever dreamed."

– Maria Hoagland

With the constantly evolving demands of one's career, community, and family life, the capacity for volunteer commitments is simply not the same as they once were years ago. We recognize this and want to provide you with opportunities to serve and engage with NACAS with as much of a time commitment as you can offer, whether that is serving as a volunteer at your regional CX event or participating on a national committee or foundation fundraiser. Our next call for volunteer nominations opens in March and I encourage you to explore the many opportunities that we have for you to share your time and talents. This month we are also opening the nominations for NACAS awards & scholarships. Within your professional circle, who do you know that deserves to be recognized for their leadership, innovation, or outstanding volunteer service? Please take a moment to recognize those who have made an impact on their campuses and within the NACAS community. Amidst this climate of budget cuts and travel restrictions, there are also several incredible scholarships available to fund professional development opportunities for you or a team member.

Until next time, I hope to see you at an upcoming NACAS program or regional CX. ■

Matt Marcial, CAE, CMP
NACAS CEO

Advertisers Index

McALISTER'S DELI

- Real Handcrafted Food and Delicious Sweet Tea – Simple, Yet Elevated
- New Restaurant Design, Flexible Footprints, Ops Simplicity (No Grills, No Fryers)
- Menu Innovation with Full and Limited Menu Options Available

MOE'S SOUTHWEST GRILL

- Food with Unmatched Taste and Quality
- Fully Customizable Menu Featuring Burritos, Bowls, Famous Queso and More
- Full and Limited Menu Options Available
- New Restaurant Design and Flexible Footprints
- Operational Simplicity and Strong Sales to Investment

jamba

- Leading brand in quality, uniqueness and delicious products
- Fast Growing Category
- Menu Evolution and Innovation on trend with Americans' desire to be more wellness focused
- Operational Simplicity
- New and contemporary store designs with flexible formats to fit about any venue

For franchising opportunities, contact **Michael Nedelkovich**
Director, Non-Traditional Development | mnedelkovich@focusbrands.com | 786-920-2941

FOCUS BRANDS® | Carvel® | CINNABON | Schlotzsky's | MOE'S SOUTHWEST GRILL | Auntie Anne's | McALISTER'S DELI | jamba

Count on choice and convenience with the Wells Fargo Campus Card℠ Program

Our program provides your campus community with:

- Optional banking access with on- and off-campus convenience.
- A choice of card programs that work for your campus.
- Checking accounts to meet the financial needs of students, faculty, and staff. Added benefits may apply with a linked Campus Card.
- Access to online and mobile tools, financial education seminars, and workshops (virtual/onsite).

Why choose Wells Fargo?

- **Experience** — more than 20 years in campus card services.
- **Access** — approximately 4,900 branches and 12,000 ATMs.
- **Marketing support** — customized material featuring your program.
- **Dedicated support** — local and national relationship managers work directly with your team.

To learn more about the Wells Fargo Campus Card℠ program, visit **wellsfargo.com/campuscard** or contact:

Vernon Sloan
704-840-9986 • vernon.sloan@wellsfargo.com

Leti Turnbull-Mason
415-748-0856 • leticia.turnbull-mason@wellsfargo.com

Wells Fargo may provide financial support to universities or colleges with the Wells Fargo Campus Card program.
Materials expire on October 31, 2022.