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opening remarks

Presidential Perspective

Despite a Year of Many Challenges, NACAS Poised for Success in the Future



MARK IRONSIDE
NACAS PRESIDENT

For the past several months, the CEO search committee has been combing through applications and conducting interviews. It was exciting to see such a broad set of applicants from the higher education industry, the business community, and nonprofit organizations.

The search process was highly competitive, and a variety of stakeholders were involved including the NACAS Board, staff, regional presidents, and business partners. We are thrilled that we were able to announce our new CEO before C3X in venerable Atlantic City.

All of these groups were highly engaged and asked thoughtful questions. My colleagues on the NACAS Board were also impressed by the current staff during the CEO transition, but even more so in their ability to come together as a team and move us forward during this pandemic. As Matt Marcial, our newly appointed CEO, joins NACAS, he is very fortunate to have this leadership team in place. The team pulled together and they fully aligned around NACAS's goals and priorities.

We've been running events and other activities at a blistering pace. Through all these events, we've seen over 2,500 participants and an average satisfaction score of 94% across all programs.

In addition to this online engagement, NACAS has maintained its student success research studies, saw a 4% increase in the benchmarking program and has seen more than 70 new members join since the beginning of the year.

Looking forward, we will be hosting an incredible and memorable C3X event, whether you can attend virtually or in-person. The in person experience will have in-depth workshops and informal roundtable discussions to foster the collaboration and innovation that auxiliary service professionals need. It will also have several networking opportunities to meet other fellow campus professionals. We hope to see you there in Atlantic City, October 18-21!

Personally, I've enjoyed serving as President of NACAS, facing the challenges together and in sync, while intentionally evaluating the attributes and leadership qualities we need in our next CEO and then conducting the nationwide search process that ultimately resulted in Matt joining NACAS.

It's been a difficult and yet rewarding year. NACAS is poised for much success in the years to come in supporting members and improving student outcomes. ■

PERSONALLY, I'VE ENJOYED SERVING AS PRESIDENT OF NACAS . . . IT'S BEEN A DIFFICULT AND YET REWARDING YEAR. NACAS IS POISED FOR MUCH SUCCESS IN THE YEARS TO COME IN SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES.

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C3X Annual Conference & Expo Returns – *With a Twist*

This year, the annual C3X conference will be offered both online and in-person at Harrah's Resort Atlantic City in New Jersey. The in-person event will feature roundtable discussions and networking opportunities in addition to live screenings or our ed sessions and general sessions.

We asked C3X Conference Chair LaNiece Tyree to give us her thoughts about the upcoming C3X Annual Conference & Expo and to update us on the hard work the conference committee is doing to ensure a safe and successful event for NACAS members.

Q: Please tell us a few details about the upcoming C3X Conference and what's in store for attendees this year.

LaNiece Tyree: As auxiliary service leaders have an experienced an unprecedented year, we are hoping that C3X will provide a blueprint to a road of recovery and hope. I hope those that attend whether virtually or in-person come away with new networks of communication, growth opportunities, and new technology strategies.

Q: After such a tumultuous year, what are the benefits of being able to learn and network with colleagues and friends in person?

LaNiece Tyree: The pandemic has taught us how much we rely on human connection. It is vital to our way of living. I strongly believe that if you attend virtually or in person, that you still walk away with new connections to individuals that can assist you with new strategies for successful outcomes, whether professional or personal.

Q: Would you talk about the NACAS conference committee and the hard work that has gone into creating both a virtual and in-person event?

LaNiece Tyree: The C3X conference team has done an amazing job of focusing on the intention and setting the pace of accomplishment. Though the timeframe for this planning period has been a bit shorter than previous years, the conference committee team has excelled at keeping the pace. I want to express my appreciation for their contribution to the planning process. This is only possible through their commitment of time and effort, which is especially notable given their normal responsibilities.

Q: Obviously, you want as many people to attend as possible, but can you speak to the value of the conference for virtual attendees as well?

LaNiece Tyree: Virtual conferences provide a unique experience to the end user, as you can attend truly what you want at any given comfortable space. Additionally, the breakout rooms and workshops can be attended without interruption to your workday, for those that are still working from home. Your professional development will not suffer, and you can continue to build your skills and knowledge set.



Q: What do you say to anyone who has concerns about attending the in-person event?

LaNiece Tyree: As the pandemic continues into the fall season, NACAS is keeping the priority of the safety of its members and staff at the forefront. The in-person portion is being held with safety at the forefront for those that are able and ready for that experience. NACAS steadfastly believes in providing a safe environment whether that is virtually in your home, or personally with us in Atlantic City. ■

LANIECE TYREE, MPA, is Director of Auxiliary Services & Event Management at Prince George's Community College.

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Building Relationships That Nurture

C3X Conference & Expo Keynote Speaker Crystal Washington has mastered the art of creating relationships that lead to business success.

BY VICTORIA LIM

When Crystal Washington's on-campus job during graduate school was going to be eliminated, she knew before the vendor that employed her. That gave her the early chance to find a new job.

In her highly competitive high school, teachers tipped her off to scholarships and opportunities other students didn't know about.

After she left her steady, high-paying hospitality job at a hotel to start her own digital marketing firm, the hotel's competitor hired her.

In addition to her ingenuity and work ethic, she credits all of these experiences to one thing: Relationships.

"They are everything," Washington says. "Contracts can be lost or won strictly on the strength of relationships even if two competing parties are equal in their offerings. Those relationships matter. Relationships are the factor in determining the success of many businesses."

Washington's background is hotel and restaurant management with an emphasis on sales and marketing. Her goal was to be a vice president of sales.

"Numbers, psychology, and people. If you understand people and their needs, it's easy," she says.

She recalls kicking off her sales career consistently hitting 125% above goal, getting bored, and asking to transition into a revenue manager role. She excelled. It was during that time she noticed the emergence of social media. Recognizing its potential, she asked her then-boss for permission to start leveraging the platforms for marketing and sales. He declined.

Washington quit. And that began her journey into digital marketing by starting her own firm. At first, mom-and-pop companies became her clients.

Then, Microsoft, Google, and British Airways. That led to speaking opportunities. She is now a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), traveling the globe sharing her insights about social media and digital strategy.

Even with many current events and issues raging on these very platforms, she says social media is not to blame.

"The issue here isn't social media. It's human. Social media is neutral, like money. Put money in the hands of someone responsible and with a charitable heart, they'll do responsible things with that. Put money in the hands of someone with a drug or gambling addiction, they'll do more of that," she says.

In fact, she says social and digital media provide organizations, like schools, the opportunity to serve their customer (students) better. Think of website chat boxes. Virtual tours. Photo galleries of success stories. The "click here and find information" at your fingertips. As millennials and Generation Zs find information online, they also make decisions with the tap of the "buy now"

(or perhaps in schools' cases, the "enroll now") button. Schools also gain insights they might not otherwise see.

"Even if you're not on social media to see the vitriol, it's still being said," she says. "You should be scared when people start whispering behind your back. Be scared when your students are saying things you can't hear. (Social media) is necessary."

Washington saw the future value of these tools while they were in their infancy. It's no surprise that she's also a Certified Futurist, which she describes as someone who has studied foresight, and engages in the practice of identifying trends and other information to create and inspire strategic plans based on alternative futures. Where a strategist may deal with the expected and the present to anticipate one outcome, a futurist uses data to look at two or three possible futures to help their clients prepare for what might be next.

"Most humans project the future based off of what they want, not what's there," she says. "For example, if someone doesn't like social media and a

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new platform comes out, they might say, 'there's no need for that.' But a futurist will say, 'what is the utility there? Is this social media network tapping into a new sector? What is the communications potential?' A futurist may not like social media but they're getting outside their biases as much as possible to make sure it's not injected into projected futures."

Regardless of the tool, the platform, or how an organization reaches its future, it will certainly include relationships. Technology and planning can help anticipate what needs will be, but first, Washington says, people need to get out of their own way.

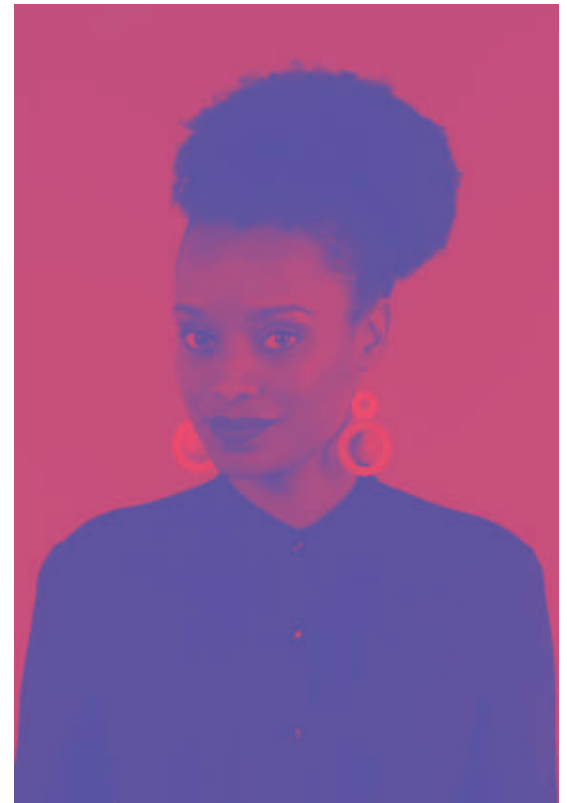
"Often times, there's an inability to not focus on ourselves. Often times, we think about what we'll get out of relationships and when we do that...we're trying to prove our value. But when you're networking and are genuinely interested in how to be helpful to someone else, it takes the pressure off of you. You'll find a way to delight them," she says.

Washington hopes attendees to her C3X Annual Conference & Expo keynote, "Nurturing Relationships for Business Success" will walk away feeling confident in their ability to leverage relationships and technology to build stronger relationships and a successful organization.

"Be prepared to come with an open mind because you'll definitely experience a mind shift at how you've been looking at relationships," she says. "Whether shy or outgoing, you'll leave with a different spin that will make it easier to build relationships with people."

Crystal Washington's keynote is Tuesday, October 19 at the C3X Annual Conference & Expo. For more information or to register, check out: <https://nacas.org/event/c3x/>. ■

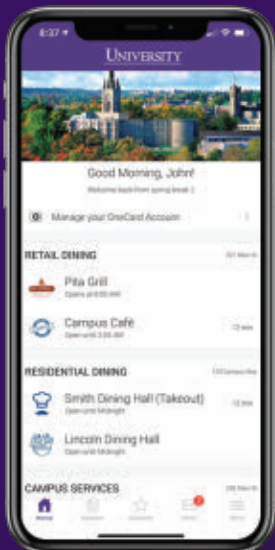
VICTORIA LIM is an award-winning journalist and multimedia storyteller. She has worked in higher education administration leading university communications and in academia as a professor of journalism.



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A Stroll Down a New Education Pathway



BY ANDY LACHMAN

It should not come as much of a surprise to readers of this magazine that the cost of postsecondary education is expensive. The price of an average bachelor's degree, including tuition, fees, room, and board, accounting for inflation, has climbed by 20.7% since the 2009-2010 academic year. Additionally, the pay differential between a person with a high school degree and a bachelor's degree, while increasing, has not kept pace with tuition increases. The increasing cost without similar increases in return has prompted some to question the feasibility of the standard education pathway.

Traditionally this pathway involves students going to college immediately after high school to prepare themselves for the workforce. However, the change in the value proposition of a college degree may influence high school graduates to take another path. As noted in a popular education podcast, an emerging trend is to flip the order and go into the workforce to prepare financially for college. One method for the people who enter the workforce intending to pursue educational aspirations is seeking employment with companies that provide educational benefits.

Several large corporations have rolled out sets of educational benefits that allow their personnel to pursue a college degree. These programs act similarly to other employment benefits and assist with recruiting and retaining personnel for these companies. A notable example is the Starbucks College Achievement Plan, which allows eligible Starbucks employees to pursue a bachelor's degree tuition-free through Arizona State's online programs. There is a long list of other national companies with various educational benefit programs, including Walmart, McDonald's, and Amazon.



At this point, you may be wondering how this trend applies to auxiliary services. The rest of this article will focus on two matters related to how the aforementioned situation intersects with auxiliary services. First, auxiliary services professionals should be prepared for changes in our client demographics. For most of us, our programs have historically been geared towards serving the needs of traditional full-time students. While the percentage of non-traditional students in postsecondary education has decreased slightly since the Great Recession, this trend of working to pursue a degree may prompt a resurgence of non-traditional part-time working students.

If more non-traditional working students enroll, it would be advantageous for auxiliaries to expand our programs to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students. These programmatic changes could include adjusting hours of services (e.g., staying open later for evening classes), adding new programs (e.g., child care), and modifying product mixes (e.g., the percentage of parking passes going to students).

As we emerge from the pandemic with the reopening of our campuses, employee recruitment has become a hot topic among auxiliary professionals. The second point regarding the workforce to degree pathway, and the main focus of this article, is how auxiliary services professionals can leverage education to promote employee recruitment and retention. Large companies such as Starbucks, Walmart, and Amazon already leverage this trend, offering educational benefits to attract employees. Auxiliary service organizations as part of academia are uniquely situated to take advantage of this opportunity too.

What are the advantages of using education as part of your employee recruitment strategy? Like other employment benefits, the significant advantage is that you distinguish your organization from your competitors. If it is more advantageous for someone to work for your institution, all other things being equal, you will likely get more applications and be able to select better candidates. Additionally,

the value of the education may defer some of the compensation requirements by potential employees.

As a retention tool, educational benefits that allow employees to take classes at your college may build greater affinity between your employee and the institution. Furthermore, education contributes to the quality of life and provides opportunities for career growth. Additionally, investing in your employees signals that you value them. These three aspects promote job satisfaction, which is essential in retention.

Beyond the recruitment and retention benefits, there are several upsides to providing formal educational opportunities to your employees. First, as employees improve their skillsets through their academic pursuits, the organization benefits from having a more skilled workforce. Additionally, if your employees are taking classes at your institution, they build relationships with your customer base. They are provided access to hear how students feel about your products and services. Moreover, they have a better understanding of the student experience and can use that knowledge to improve your programs.

Here are a few practical pieces of advice for auxiliary services professionals who want to use education as a recruitment or retention tool:

Know Your Institution. Many institutions already have programs established for their faculty and staff that offer either a discount or waiver of tuition. To assist your team in navigating the enrollment and financial processes, it helps to know what programs are available, the eligibility requirements, and how to access the programs. If your institution does not offer tuition waivers, there are likely scholarships available for your staff. Overall, the more information you know about the process, the easier it will be to assist your team.

Encourage Your Team and Colleagues. It is essential to discuss the educational options that are available at your institution with your team. Employees might not be aware of their choices or might need a little encouragement to pursue a degree. Even mentioning the options signals that you believe they have potential in this area. However, remember that these educational pursuits are a significant commitment, and you should not push someone into them who does not want to engage.

Show the Path. Mentoring is a powerful tool that promotes professional development. As a mentor, many people end up showing their mentee possible career paths. In the discussion of education and the intersection with the auxiliary services profession, it is helpful to map out how particular

education achievement connects with certain job positions.

Be Flexible. One of the challenges for working students is scheduling the classes that they need around their work schedule. As a supervisor, you can assist your employees in facing this challenge by offering a flexible work schedule. Flexible work schedules are growing in popularity for a variety of reasons. Whether for class or other reasons, the same principles for success apply, such as communication. This flexibility can be beneficial to your organization too. Does your organization need someone that can come in early or stay late? Trading a longer break mid-day for someone to go to class can free them up to be available at these times.

Walk the Walk. Although it might sound cliché, leading by example is a powerful tool. If you want your team to take advantage of educational and training opportunities provided to them, emulate the behavior you want to see from them. Being a lifelong learner has many benefits that are worth exploring.

For the Fun of It. Not everyone is going to want or need to pursue another degree. The same colleges that offer discounts or tuition waivers for staff pursuing degrees usually also provide them to personnel wishing to take fun classes outside of a degree path. Would you or one of your team enjoy taking a dance class? How about beginning Japanese in anticipation of an upcoming vacation? These classes can add to the quality of life and provide a connection to the campus community.

Although this conversation has centered primarily around more formula postsecondary educational opportunities, in the same way as was previously discussed, investing in other non-credit-based education for your staff may benefit your organization. There are many non-credit ways to invest in your employees' skillset and future. The National Association of College Auxiliary Services (NACAS) has several outstanding options for this type of professional development, including conferences, webinars, and Certified Auxiliary Services Professional (CASP) certification.

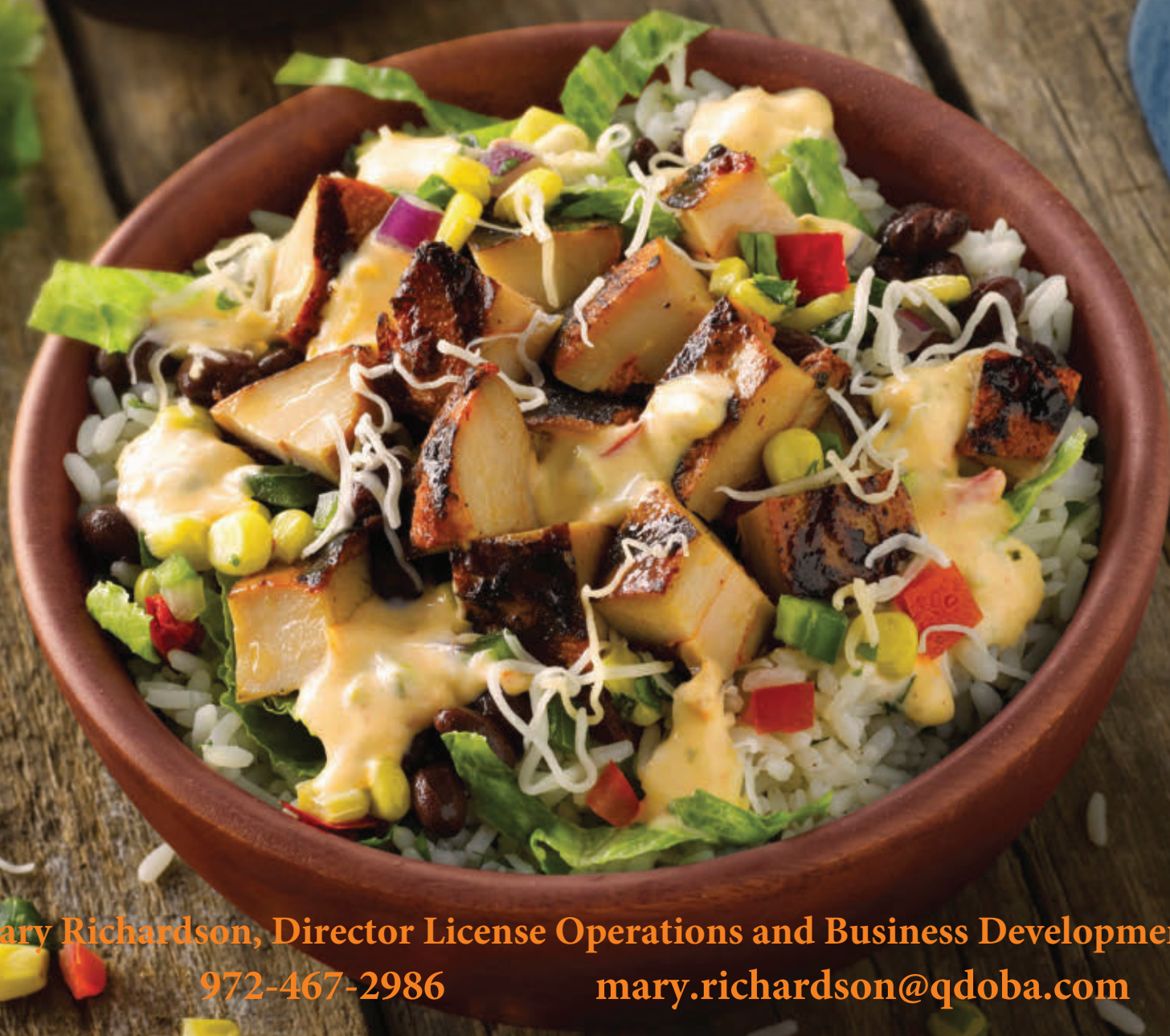
Ultimately, as our profession is rooted in the education industry, we need to embrace the industry's values. Lifelong learning, encouraging professional development, and promoting social mobility through educational opportunities are a few examples. Providing and promoting educational benefits to our workforce aligns with these values while creating stronger organizations. ■

ANDY LACHMAN is Manager of University Housing, Food and Mail Services at University of Hawaii at Manoa.

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Auxiliary Services Responded Well to the Pandemic:



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What Changed and What Will Continue?

BY JEFF DOVER AND TRAVIS TRAINI

It has certainly been an interesting 14 months and, for auxiliary services, it has been no exception. I think most of us are tired of words and phrases like unprecedented, the new normal, and pivot, but we should be proud of how auxiliary services responded to the pandemic meeting the needs of campus populations and, in some instances, their local communities. In many cases, auxiliary services' responses to the pandemic are beginning to reverse as the number of cases reduce and more Americans are vaccinated. Some of the changes made, however, are likely to continue and have ongoing implications on ancillary service operations and budgets.

Most institutions are expecting the fall 2021 semester to be more consistent with 2019 than 2020; however, some are planning for reduced populations, which will continue to have an adverse impact on revenues. This includes reduction in food service outlets, dining area seating, only offering food "to go", etc.

Branded merchandise sales at bookstores have declined with the reduction of students on campuses and the significantly reduced attendance at varsity sporting events. Demand for parking and transportation has also declined, the former an important revenue source.

TECHNOLOGY

Many institutions were already increasingly using technology in their auxiliary operations. The pandemic has increased the rate of technology adoption on many campuses. Mobile ordering adoption rates are expected to increase post-pandemic and in one example, Ohio State University experienced mobile food service ordering increase from 35% of total orders in 2019 to 98% with COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in 2020. In the food service industry, THE NPD GROUP indicates digital orders increased 23% from 2014 to 2019. The growth in digital ordering experienced by Ohio State in 2020-2021 is not unique. According to THE NPD Group, digital ordering in the United States

increased 133% in 2020 from 8% to 19% of all orders and will be significant going forward.

The use of kiosks for ordering is increasing on many campuses, such as George Mason University. Mobile order pay applications are being used in food service departments and other ancillary operations. Some full-service restaurants on campuses such as the University of British Columbia and the University of Guelph are being converted into modified service delivery, with orders being placed on kiosks and then delivered to tables. This strategy is reducing labor costs, allows the guest to customize their order, and limits interactions with staff members.

Virtual bookstores were common before the pandemic as textbooks have increasingly been provided online as opposed to hard copies. The pandemic has resulted in many institutions, such as Clarion University of Pennsylvania, making this transformation.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Increased cleaning and disinfecting were an immediate response to the pandemic. These expenses will continue going forward. Auxiliary services operators will continue to purchase more disinfectants as well as gloves, other cleaning supplies, etc. than they had in the past. Incremental labor resources for housekeeping activities will also be required.

Historically, cleaning and disinfecting has been hidden from our customers, either completed in back-of-house areas or completed in off-peak hours. This has changed. To provide comfort to students, staff, and faculty, institutions are performing housekeeping functions in the public eye as well as communicating what they are doing to keep the campus community safe.

DELIVERY

On-campus delivery has increased in response to COVID-19 quarantine protocols with delivery required to students confined to dorm rooms. This is not unique. According to THE NPD GROUP there

was a 70% increase in food service meals eaten at home in February 2021 versus 2020. We suspect food service meals eaten in dorm rooms would show a similar increase. When it comes to meals eaten at home from restaurants, the increase in delivery (February 2021 versus February 2020) was 128%, outpacing takeout (+8%) and drive through (+19%). Delivery will continue to be an important segment going forward – and this includes higher education campuses.

Many institutions, such as Ohio State University, were already exploring variations of on-campus delivery before the pandemic and others are likely to implement a form of delivery post-pandemic. George Mason University and others have been using robots to deliver food across campus. Some institutions have realized underutilized facilities such as graduate club or lounge kitchens may be used as ghost kitchens to facilitate additional production for delivery orders. Institutions are exploring ways to reduce the labor impact of providing delivery, such as designating pickup/delivery locations, batching deliveries every hour, and/or installing lockers to act as pickup points for delivery or mobile orders. When implementing on campus delivery, determining the meal delivery price, minimum order amount, or a combination (with complimentary delivery above a certain threshold) is a key to success. Food may be delivered by car, bike, or on foot. The best method will vary by campus, outlet/residence locations and parking capacity.

Off-campus restaurants delivering food to campus were impacting food service departments before the pandemic, providing additional options for those on campus. In 2019 at George Mason University, approximately 60% of the 6,200 on-campus students ordered food from off-campus restaurants and typically spent between \$250 and \$350 per semester on food bought outside their meal plans. Students are part of the demographic that have embraced delivery as it fits into their demand for convenience and their "what I want, when I want" lifestyle preferences. During the



pandemic, delivery, either by restaurants themselves or using third-party delivery, has dramatically increased. Adding on-campus delivery can assist campus food services to defend against the competitive threat from off-campus food providers. At a minimum, on-campus offerings will be able to directly compete with the convenience offered by third-party delivery.

CHANGING BUSINESS MODELS

In some institutions, students have also begun developing on-campus micro-delivery services with recent examples from Boston University and the University of Calgary. Some institutions have partnered with third party delivery services to offer on-campus delivery.

Auburn University, Rider University and other institutions have implemented food lockers to allow students to pre-order food. When their order is ready, they get a notification on their phones, which are also used to open the lockers. This provides an element of convenience appreciated by students as well as helps manage demand in food outlets during peak periods, such as the

ten minutes between classes, during the lunch meal periods, etc. Food lockers may also be a useful pickup solution for food service outlets with a limited footprint. Some institutions are using lockers for bookstore purchases and/or for student delivery of parcels.

Snacking (several small meal occasions outside of traditional meal periods) has long been popular with students. The satisfaction with all-you-care-to-eat ("AYCTE") meal plans is a testament to this trend. During the pandemic, snacking was a source of comfort and entertainment. The NPD GROUP expects snacking to reduce in the post-pandemic period but will be greater than before COVID-19. Higher education institutions must make sure they are meeting students' needs for snacking and have options available later in the evening than traditionally available – and perhaps reconsider AYCTE meal plans. On a side note, AYCTE meal plans typically do not allow students to take out meals. With dining rooms closed and/or seating resisted, this changed. While some institutions, like the University of Toronto, converted to declining

balance plans, others like Queens University and Tennessee State University allowed takeout at every meal.

Many institutions, including the University of Southern Maine worked with their culinary team to provide meals to go for faculty and staff as well as making these available to the community for pick up. Such revenue streams could potentially continue post-pandemic.

Changes in outlet design to accommodate social distancing will likely remain in some form in the short term. Plexi glass dividers between cashiers and customers and other retail spaces will likely remain for the foreseeable future in many regions of the country.

MEETINGS (AND THE IMPLICATION ON CATERING)

Many of us will be happy to resume in-person meetings. During the pandemic, however, we have gotten used to and become productive using web meeting applications such as Zoom. The use of web meeting technology has had an impact on catering revenues on campuses. Going forward,

some will continue to use such applications given the increase in productivity (i.e., not traveling to and from meetings). Combined with short-term limits on gatherings in some jurisdictions, catering and other meeting-related revenues are likely to take time to recover.

Another factor adversely impacting catering and retail food services in higher education institutions is the number of staff and faculty working from home. Pre-pandemic, about 3% of employed persons worked from home, which increased to about 64% during the peak of the pandemic and is currently at about 50%. Post-pandemic some staff and faculty will continue to work from home, certainly more than previously.

STUDENT GATHERING AREAS

Many institutions have been working to increase the amount of space available for students to gather to study, unwind, and socialize. The pandemic has resulted in the reduction or elimination of seating in these areas and food service facilities are no

exception. Post-pandemic, the demand for such space will increase as students, staff, and faculty resume socializing. Socializing for some students may extend beyond food hubs resulting in increased efforts to develop grab-and-go selections to include greater variety, higher quality, and more hot items in grab-and-go formats.

BEVERAGE AGREEMENTS

During the pandemic, most institutions were approached by their bottled beverage provider to re-negotiate their agreements. Definitely, the quantum of beverages purchased this academic year is relatively low. The starting position of the major bottling companies was to only provide a per case incentive and forgo all other compensation. This was challenging for many institutions as the incentives provided are important to many campus departments and may have been earmarked for capital investments. Beverage purchasing will no doubt return to previous levels as campus populations return to normal. Auxiliary service departments

may have decreased compensation in the 2021-2022 academic year.

CONCLUSION

Auxiliary services departments should be commended on their response to the pandemic. While most campuses are planning on returning to normal operations for the Fall semester 2021, or at least closer to normal than the 2020-2021 academic year, some of the changes to auxiliary services offerings will continue. Some are short term while others may be ongoing. When planning for the upcoming year, consider the impact of pandemic-response operations on your revenues and expenses. ■

JEFF DOVER and TRAVIS TRAINI are Principals at fsSTRATEGY, a consulting firm specializing in strategic advisory services for the hospitality industry, with an emphasis on food and beverage. Jeff is also a member of the NACAS Communication Services Committee. They can be reached at (416) 229-2290 or nextsteps@fsstrategy.com.

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The Challenges and Rewards of **Bringing Students –** **and Life –** Back to College Campuses

As colleges and universities reopen this fall, auxiliary services professionals are planning unique and innovative ways to return to operations under completely different circumstances than prior to COVID-19. NACAS asked professionals at The Universities of Shady Grove and North Carolina AT&T to discuss what they are doing that other institutions might benefit from as students return to campus.

Auxiliary Service at The Universities at Shady Grove: Fall Reopening Plans

BY OBIOMA AKAIGWE

The Universities at Shady Grove (USG), is an innovative partnership of nine University System of Maryland (USM) universities on one campus in Montgomery County. Each of the partner universities provides its most highly sought academic programs and awards its own degrees. USG, in turn, provides centralized on-site student, academic, and administrative services. This unique integrated approach allows USG to offer 80 upper-level undergraduate, graduate degree, and certificate programs, in flexible formats that allow students to live, work, and study close to home. USG connects students to outstanding career opportunities while providing regional employers with a highly educated, skilled workforce.

For this academic year 2021-22, USG and its partners are planning to bring life back to the campus by offering at least 80% of its classes in-person. After the past challenging and frightening 15 months our students, faculty, and staff are ready to walk the hallways of our buildings, dine at the café, socialize at the student lounge, collaborate, network, and thrive together. With the vaccine widely available, people are required to be vaccinated before returning to campus and we are excited to provide auxiliary services in person – again!

With students returning to campus, we have thought through creative and safe ways to operate and provide services. As the number of fully vaccinated people continue to grow, we are hopeful that things will return to normal in the coming months.

Our auxiliary service department is adapting to the changes by adjusting services expectations and trying new things. Our conference and events services are limiting booked events to mission-focused events, a strategic move that will realign and allocate limited resources effectively. We are working with our food vendor on ways to serve our campus at a minimal cost. The plan is to reduce hours of operation in our food locations, package food to-go, expand the C-store offering providing healthy food

and snacks when the café is closed, and including more sustaining food items in machines across the campus. Additionally, we are collaborating with our food vendor to engage local food truck providers to be on campus during late afternoons and evenings to provide variety and more access to food for our students when the café is closed.

The Campus Rec Center will continue to offer virtual classes and in-person access to other gym facilities, activities, and classes.

Furthermore, the past year has exposed the level of food insecurity in our communities and yes, amongst college students. With that in mind, we are implementing different initiatives. First is the reopening of our mobile market which had to shut down last year due to the pandemic. The market runs on the fourth Monday of every month through a partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank,

which provides fresh seasonal fruits, vegetables, and other food items free for our students and community. With safety and health in mind we are adopting a drive-through model for the fall semester. Secondly, we converted our food pantry fondly called “Grover Essentials” to “Grover-To-Go”. Rather than shop in-person, students can pick up food and toiletries from a designated locker; we have been using the lockers since fall of 2020, and it has been successful.

Finally, we look forward to seeing and serving our students in-person, and we are hopeful that our auxiliary services units will continue to provide services that will add value to the campus experience of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. ■

OBIOMA AKAIGWE is Manager/Auxiliary Services at The Universities at Shady Grove (USG).



#AggiesCare:

North Carolina A&T Connects Community in Pandemic

BY ANGELA A. PETERSON

In our 130-year history we have faced adversity – but nothing like the COVID-19 pandemic. Our students and families continue to face challenges, but we know their resilience overcomes crisis. Campus Enterprises strives not only to encourage academic success, but we empower students to grow as individuals and find their place in a larger community outside of the classroom. Our student services culture has always been focused on breaking barriers and changing the status quo. Our team not only adapted for the pandemic – we have set a new standard for our community.

North Carolina A&T has transitioned to a new normal and we have accommodated auxiliary services for the safety, convenience, and financial well-being of the student body. Based on student feedback, our current focus is on mitigating the financial barrier to attending North Carolina A&T State University. Campus Enterprises has focused on creating programs

and enhancing operations that reduce the overall cost of attendance.

Textbooks account for a sizeable part of recurring costs in college life. We are proud to eliminate this expense through a partnership with Barnes and Noble College by implementing the First Day Complete Program. North Carolina A&T is proud to be the first public historically black university to implement this course delivery model. This modality will ensure that students receive the textbooks they need on or before the first day of class at no charge for the next two years. Furthermore, our faculty is not restricted by the cost of their text selection and can continue to choose materials best suited for their class format.

Our students are members of Generation Z. We understand loyalty, communication, and personalization resonates. This need for connection is fueled by one-on-one interactions with peers and engagements with our faculty and staff. According to Foodservice

Director Magazine, 40% of students visited campus eateries less often during COVID-19 because they were not able to socialize with their peers. Therefore, our business and finance team implemented dining scholarships as we continue to deliver one-of-a-kind dining experiences in our 13 on-campus restaurants.

Every student that selects a meal plan for the 2021-22 school year will automatically receive a \$250 scholarship. North Carolina A&T announced a series of major investments through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, and we allocated those funds directly to students. Many student experiences are made outside of the classroom – and we are proud to support our community.

As our campus continues to grow, we continue to improve our methods through technology. Student's desire added value without additional cost to their university experience. App-based mobile ordering, digital kiosks, and contactless ordering were already mainstays before the pandemic.

Aggieland's culture is rooted in innovation – so we continue to invest in additional services that elevate the experience. We are in discussion to bring battery-operated robots that will deliver mobile orders to our students.

Convenience has been the cornerstone of the wrap-around services Campus Enterprises provides. To that end, we have made parking virtual and contactless. Our investment in a digital license plate recognition (LPR) system reduces long-term expense of printing and eliminates the need for in-person parking permit pickup for surface lots. When a student registers their vehicle online, they will immediately be granted parking privileges. This innovation will allow Campus Enterprises to reinvest funding into other student programming.

These enhancements are not temporary – they are here to stay post-pandemic. Now – more than ever – our students crave unique, authentic experiences that show how much we care about their well-being. These transformative changes cultivate a tremendous sense of Aggie Pride for our next generation of students. We will continue to be creative in engaging our students and equipping them for academic success – because that's what Aggies Do. ■

ANGELA A. PETERSON has served as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Enterprises at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina since 2005. She has worked in various capacities in Campus Enterprises since 1994.



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Inclusive Excellence in Collegiate Recreation: **How NIRSA is Exhibiting Action**

BY CARA LUCIA

Many of us over the last year have continued to challenge our own learning and expand our knowledge about diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and antiracism. The conversation of how DEI shows up in collegiate recreation is rooted in historical reflection, highlights of progress, acknowledgment of the continuous work that will need to take place to move the needle forward, and the sharing of strategies that contribute to positive change within our association – NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation.

NIRSA's founding is somewhat unique amongst our higher education association peers and our roots make our call to uphold our values of equity, diversity, and inclusion all the more central to our work. The founding of our association in 1950 is grounded from the efforts of 20 male and female leaders from 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities marking the professionalization of collegiate recreation as a distinct field of practice; yet after the 1957 election of NIRSA's first white

male president, it took until 1989 for another Black male or female to be elected president. Additionally, despite its gender inclusive start, in 1959 association leadership made the decision to eliminate women from the membership ranks; they later reinstated women in 1971 – one year before the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Now, in 2021, all three positions of the NIRSA Board of Director's presidential track are held by women.

NIRSA, like all organizations, was faced with re-examining itself in the face of last year's racial injustices. I mention these two points of our history to point out the particular importance of acknowledging past hurts related to racial injustice within the association and the very real inequities regarding race, gender, and intersections of identities. While NIRSA has so much to be proud of in its history, there is still much work to do.

As we approach the 75th anniversary of our association, we are committed to knowing our history and understanding how the impacts of the past are felt in very real ways by colleagues in our field and we have to be conscious of that. With 2021 being the 50th anniversary of women being reinstated into the association, a series of articles titled "Women Making History" has shared the evolution of women in the association from 1950 to today. With much more of our story needing to be told, NIRSA's History and Legacy Work Group was established to identify ways we can continually honor our past while looking to the future and documenting our living history.

Insight into our association history is also tied into how our governance structure has evolved over time and the creation of our six strategic values. In June 2011, six strategic values were named for our association. Equity, diversity, and inclusion was one of those values. An EDI commission was formed to help integrate this value into the fabric of our association. Some outcomes of their work included NIRSA's Statement for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, NIRSA's statement on marriage equality, partnering with the NIRSA Champ Series to create NIRSA's Transgender Athlete Participation Policy, and the creation of the EDI Resource Guide.

The work, however, was only beginning. Following the wide-spread racial injustices seen in 2020, our headquarters staff, association leadership, and membership became engaged in difficult dialogue, identified forms of support, and participated in opportunities for learning. During this same period, NIRSA adopted its new Strategic Plan (2021-2024), stating as one of its priorities: "NIRSA will strive for inclusive excellence through an anti-racist and equity lens." The intentional progress and efforts we had made since 2011 as an association were critical, but 2020 exposed the reality that we needed to take a deeper dive into the systems of the association so that we can best live out our vision of inspiring healthy people and healthy communities worldwide.

Our actions need to illustrate our EDI value by prioritizing inclusive excellence. Our initial steps were the implementation of NIRSA's 21 Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge and the creation of the NIRSA Caucuses. As noted on our website, "The

concept of the 21-Day Challenge was introduced several years ago by diversity expert Eddie Moore, Jr. to create greater understanding of the intersections of race, power, privilege, supremacy, oppression, and equity." Our members had the opportunity to join the challenge in fall 2020 and, through the end of the year, members can sign-up to join the on-demand version. The caucuses are, "opportunities for those who share a common identity to meet separately to gather, connect, and learn." The caucuses have continued to meet throughout the year and will identify how to best use their gathering space to meet the needs of their individual communities.

As NIRSA continues to develop strategies and actions to further our commitment to EDI, we are aware of the importance of creating opportunities that extend beyond education and dialogue. We knew that as an association we needed to dive deeper into the systemic inequities that exist within the association. With this in mind, we decided to pilot the Tidal Equality Equity Sequence with some of the volunteer leadership groups within the association. The equity sequence equips individuals and teams to build equity collaboratively by using five probing questions when making various decisions, from creating a new program to developing a new product. This year our attention will be on using the sequence across volunteer leadership groups as we make decisions that impact the future of our association.

To dive even deeper into our examination of the association, we reviewed multiple RFPs to find a consulting group to assess NIRSA boards and headquarters to address system inequities within the association. Once the RFP review was complete, we selected 122 Consulting, a minority and women-owned consulting firm that specializes in working with leaders, businesses, sports teams, nonprofits, higher education institutions, and other organizations to create thriving communities committed to justice. To see this come to fruition, 122 Consulting, NIRSA Headquarters staff, and a newly created Climate Study Steering Committee are working together to assess NIRSA's climate, culture, and structures to determine areas in which the association supports inclusion and where there are barriers that prevent true equity. We anticipate this assessment will be complete by January 2022.

This is only the beginning of an intentional journey that will expand how we exhibit our value of EDI and live out our strategic priority that "NIRSA will strive for inclusive excellence through an anti-racist and equity lens." Doing this work requires intentional time and energy from NIRSA Headquarters staff and volunteer leadership groups, as well as engagement from our members so we can approach this work

collaboratively. It is imperative we understand that as this work is happening at the association-level it is concurrently happening on the ground at each of our respective campuses.

As president, I believe that as we share the work of the association it will also be important for us to share the stories of our members who are on the ground doing equity work on their campus. These stories, from colleagues across the association, can act as resources, networks, and idea generators for other members who are seeking out strategies to implement on their campuses.

To this end, throughout the year, the NIRSA president blog will have vlog segments called Change Makers of NIRSA. I shared in a recent blog titled, "Get ready to meet many of NIRSA's Change Makers this coming year," the thought behind Change Makers: "We experienced a huge learning curve this year with the pandemic and exposure to systemic racial injustice. And, as we move forward, the rate of change will only continue to increase over the coming years. We all continue to navigate social changes while working in environments made up of four generations, sharing information through various modes of communication, competing for environmental resources, addressing systemic structures that perpetuate injustice, and constantly reimagining how we do what we do — all while trying to give attention to the importance of our personal wellbeing and the wellbeing of those we serve." The goal of Change Makers, "is to create synergy around the concept of *critical hope* (hope with action) during times of change. I look forward to sharing stories, insights, and resources from colleagues and peers across the United States and Canada."

NIRSA's vision is to be the premier association of leaders in higher education, inspiring healthy people and healthy communities worldwide. Our dedication to inclusive excellence intersects with our commitment to being a driving force in an integrated approach to wellbeing and to reimagining learning, education, and networking for our members. Our goal is to provide the education and resources so that NIRSA members are further empowered to do this purposeful work on their campuses and to create space for those they serve to be well, belong, and thrive. This work is continuous and will take intentional dedication of the association headquarters staff, volunteer leadership, and engaged members to move toward progress. Once we know better, we must do better, and we must act. We now know better, and we will exhibit action. ■

CARA LUCIA is an Associate Professor and Department Chair of Sport Management at Elon University. She currently serves as President for NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation.

RESILIENCE AND MOVING FORWARD: A MESSAGE FROM THE NACAS STAFF

Over the past 18 months, NACAS has demonstrated incredible resilience as an organization, at all levels. Not unlike our members' campuses, we've faced challenges that were unprecedented in the Association's history. Never has such a global event truly impacted our business operations and our core member services in such a sudden and rapid way. And nevertheless, through amazing courage, collaboration, patience, and persistence, our membership remained engaged and supportive, our programs continued in new formats, and NACAS is steadily moving toward an encouraging future. We owe this to all who make up NACAS.

BALANCING IT ALL AND REMEMBERING WE'RE HUMAN

The 125+ people serving on NACAS boards and committees have done amazing work to support NACAS members through the pandemic. Our leaders have balanced impossible schedules between campus demands and personal life, all while keeping NACAS a priority, too. They've stepped up to offer help however they can. They've been patient, flexible, and adaptable as we fundamentally adjusted existing programs, waited out decisions until we had more data in the constant unknown of COVID-19, and then moved quickly as soon as we had a clear direction.

Our volunteers have also played a key role in the staff's resilience through the pandemic. From offering

us space during the invasion of the Capitol, when it was hard for some of us to be fully present on a conference call; to checking in with us directly on how we're doing amongst the constant change and uncertainty. These moments really speak to the humanity of our volunteer leadership and the community of NACAS. It helped keep us going so that we could better serve our members, and we know you did the same for your students and staff on campus, too.

TESTING OUR VALUES & LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

It is often proven that values are tested at times of crisis, hard decisions, or conflict. What a year to test our values!

From the NACAS staff perspective, we are proud of how we as a team have stayed true to our values through a global pandemic, navigated conflict in healthy ways, and continued to show so much care and concern for one another. Our colleagues have courageously stepped up into new and uncomfortable roles and uplifted each other along the way.

Within higher education, we've seen similar challenges at our members' institutions. Auxiliary services have rapidly adapted their operations to address pandemic needs, while losing significant revenue and questioning the near- and long-term impact on the future. At the same time, so much institutional knowledge has left many campuses. These compounding challenges are a test of

leadership: sticking true to personal and institutional values and keeping the students and the mission of the institution in mind.

As we move forward, how are auxiliary leaders creating cultures built on values that can sustain any new challenges on the horizon? What are the core guiding principles in these tough organizational decisions as we move toward the future?

SHOWING UP STRONG FOR THE NACAS COMMUNITY

NACAS members and business partners have shown up for this organization during an intense time of need for community and collaboration. You've put your students first and have trusted this organization to help you do that. Thousands of members offered their time and expertise to present, host a roundtable, support one another through the NACAS Lounge, and engage in virtual events by contributing to lively discussions – in bigger ways and larger numbers than ever before. That is powerful.

As we approach C3X this Fall, we invite you to continue the engaging conversations, ask your peers for support, and lean on NACAS to help you navigate the future of the profession. While the last 18 months have challenged us, and while the future still has a lot of uncertainty, one thing is certain: the NACAS community is resilient, adaptable, and stronger together.

We can't wait to see you at C3X! ■

NACAS MEMBERS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS HAVE SHOWN UP FOR THIS ORGANIZATION DURING AN INTENSE TIME OF NEED FOR COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION. YOU'VE PUT YOUR STUDENTS FIRST AND HAVE TRUSTED THIS ORGANIZATION TO HELP YOU DO THAT.

THE NACAS STAFF



Matt Marcial, Chief Executive Officer



Molly Caldera, Administrative Assistant



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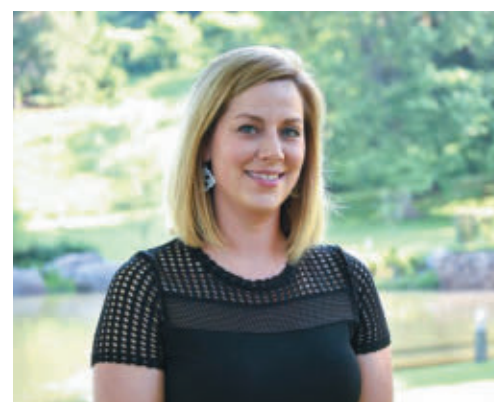
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