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to Join Your Colleagues
at C3X in Las Vegas

The Ins and Outs of
Successfully Navigating
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Why Toxic Culture
Matters

Student Author
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opening remarks

Presidential Perspective

Lessons Learned Picking Berries

After 30 years in Auxiliary Services, I see analogies to what we do like Haley Joel Osment sees dead people; they are everywhere. Let me share where my head has been lately.

I may have already told you that I live on the edge of the frontier in Ohio. Life can be a little simpler sometimes. Simpler, at least, at home. Summertime on the frontier, one of my simple tasks is picking wild berries, mostly raspberries and black berries. This involves beating the heat, mosquitoes, and briars for a quart or two of nature's goodness. While maybe not "fun," it is an honest chore; one that I have found is good for the soul.

In the style of an all-too-familiar leadership book, allow me to present the **12 Lessons Learned from Picking Berries**:

- 1. Wear the right uniform.** I want to say that appearance does not matter but it can. What really matters is that you dress appropriately for the task at hand. In the quest for berries, you are going to sweat, get cut up, and be attacked by all kinds of flying and stinging insects. Plan, dress appropriately, and learn from mistakes. What you wear may make any task immensely more pleasant.
- 2. Resilience and determination pay off.** Picking berries is not for the weak of spirit. Do not quit. When one path is blocked, find another. When you get stuck, back up and start again. The one caveat is that you must be present to win. That is, berries are picked by those that show up and persist through the challenges.
- 3. Pick what is easy first.** Of course, right; we need all the victories we can get. Even the easy ones. However, we often look right past those berries that are right in front of us. I try to remind myself that if I must beat a retreat for whatever reason (picture storm clouds or hornets), at least I literally grabbed the low hanging fruit. Just make

sure that you do not pass it up because it is easy; life is already hard enough.

- 4. Look beyond what is easy.** While your focus may be up close, you still have to make some judgments on just how far into the brambles you are willing to go. Only you can make that decision. Just remember that you still have to get out in one piece.
- 5. Perspective Matters.** Things can look different given different light. What appears ripe in the direct sun may look different in the shade. Find the light that works best for you and use it. Then change direction and look again. You will be pleasantly surprised what you find from your new vantage point.
- 6. Sometimes you get scratched up.** No matter how careful or slow and methodical you are, the thorns are going to get you sooner or later. You just do the best you can to limit the bleeding and move on.
- 7. Be satisfied.** Life is lived by those doing. You are doing and that is half the battle. You will only get those berries that are there and no more. You cannot wish more berries into existence. Take your victories and your berries and be happy.
- 8. Pay attention to what is coming to fruition next.** Try not to be so focused on the task at hand that you fail to project and speculate about what is coming next. Attentiveness can help you see when the best fruit is a day or two away.
- 9. Keep your schedule flexible.** Berries ripen on their own schedule, not yours. You can only pick when the time is right. Regardless of the weather, your fatigue, or any other conflict or excuse, when it is time to work, you work.
- 10. There is value in silence and being present with yourself.** Worth all the berries combined is being able to be present with your own thoughts. You do not have to be on the frontier to turn off the cell phone, podcast, music, TV in the background,

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A Personal Invitation to Join Your Colleagues at

C3X in the Unique City of Las Vegas



Annual welcome event first week of school at sunset.

BY JENNIFER GRAY

Greetings NACAS colleagues! I am thrilled to welcome you to Las Vegas for C3X 2022 in November. The conference committee has been hard at work preparing for a fully in-person event for the first time since 2019, and we have missed you!

I find so much inspiration amongst my colleagues at NACAS. It keeps me motivated to find the best paths forward to student success while keeping the business of higher education moving ahead collaboratively. It's been a long time since we've all been together and I look forward to seeing you, talking in person at an ed session, and connecting over shared challenges and bright, new ideas!

I invite you to join us this year at Caesars Palace, where we will hear from keynote speaker Shola Richards about building and sustaining cultures of peak performance (and joyful ones at that). In Monday's keynote, we will hear from Culture X cofounder Charlie Sull, a leading expert on toxic culture who will explain how and why no leader can ignore it. In a time of unprecedented challenges to mental health and work culture, both Shola's and Charlie's messages promise to inspire and challenge you. Finally, we are very excited about this year's offerings for tours, the Expo, and our curated education sessions. As you learn more about them over the next month, I think you will agree!

Collaboration is a hallmark of the NACAS experience, and I am proud of the ways that NACAS continues to engage Institutional Members and Business Partners seamlessly. You won't only find our partners at the Expo, although I hope you will spend time here and learn about the latest trends and designs in flow! You will find our Business Partners presenting at sessions, sitting next to you in thoughtful conversation, and sharing ideas and stories that help us all find connection and commonality.

I recently attended West CX and had a chance to hear from both of our Matts (Portner and Marcial)

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UNLV student involvement fair; semi-annual student involvement event.

AN EPICENTER OF HOSPITALITY, LAS VEGAS NEVER CEASES TO IMPROVE, AND IT NEVER CEASES TO IMPRESS. THERE IS A DEEP PASSION FOR CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY IN LAS VEGAS — ONE THAT NACAS SHARES. I CHALLENGE YOU TO FIND THAT BY EXPLORING THE OFF-STRIP SIGHTS THAT MAKE LAS VEGAS SO UNIQUE.



JESSE HUDSON PHOTOGRAPHY



Red Rock Canyon/Calico Basin labyrinth before a storm.

about how we need to keep moving to navigate the “new abnormal” when it comes to campus services, student success, and the ever-moving target of a global pandemic. I couldn’t agree more. NACAS C3X is happening in exactly the right place this year: “Navigating the abnormal” seems like a regular occurrence in Las Vegas, especially when you stay on the world-famous strip! There are many colorful and unique experiences to explore on the strip, and its fast-paced and enthusiastic embrace of “different” are a few of the things that brought me to the desert. I joined the student housing team at UNLV in 2006 for a major change of pace from

the east coast, and I’ve stayed because this city and everyone in it are constantly reinventing themselves and making improvements each time.

An epicenter of hospitality, Las Vegas never ceases to improve, and it never ceases to impress. There is a deep passion for connection and community in Las Vegas — one that NACAS shares. I challenge you to find that by exploring the off-strip sights that make Las Vegas so unique. Catch a glimpse of old Vegas when you visit the Peppermill, Frankie’s Tiki Room, or the Neon Museum. Experience the burgeoning indie and art neighborhood around east Fremont Street

and Fergusons Downtown; a city block rooted in community. Finally, take a short road trip while you are here to marvel at the natural beauty of Springs Preserve, Red Rock Canyon, and Valley of Fire. The place I never thought I’d stay in has now been home for 16 years and I can’t wait to share it with you. ■



JENNIFER GRAY is Director, Student Union & Event Services at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas



The Ins and Outs of Successfully Navigating Contracts

BY ED KANE

The management and oversight of a contractor comes with the territory in the life of an auxiliary professional. For the most part, these transactions take place with only the occasional hiccup, but what happens when things don't go the way you thought they should? The following might provide some early warning signs, suggestions, and hopefully some encouragement that things can be different.

When it comes to dealing with a contractor, problems can fall into several categories: Those which

occur during the day-to-day delivery of the service, persistent issues, and serious long running issues which could result in termination of the contract.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Let's take the example of a large-scale dining services contract at a school. Due to the size of the agreement and the daily number of transactions, things don't always go according to plan. Service expectations may not be executed in a

professional manner. The customer experience may be impacted due to product or staff shortages. Lines form, given the volume of students and the compressed service times. Things do go wrong and how they are managed is critical to ensuring you nip them in the bud.

Both you and the on-site General Manager need to work together to resolve issues and mitigate their impact. This could require improvements in training, automatization, or changing

venue layouts. Contract management at this level requires working cooperatively and paying attention to detail.

Being open and honest with feedback is paramount. Following up with a quick email or note is always advisable. Never ignore the daily oversight of your contractor and do not assume that everything is okay just because you do not hear any complaints. Complacency will always result in service decline.

PERSISTENT PROBLEMS

Persistent problems, by their very nature, are both irritating and annoying. They also strain the working relationship with the contractor.

Perhaps the most frustrating problems are those which continue to occur but are never quite serious enough to prompt you to consider terminating the contract. Let's say your customer satisfaction survey scores never seem to improve. Perhaps you need to look at the survey questions and format, the survey timing, or seek out other similar organizations for innovative ideas. Whatever happens, do not give up working on these issues. Try taking an incremental approach, which may result in improvements over time.

Sometimes bringing in a fresh set of eyes to provide alternate solutions can be helpful. You may wish to consider the use of peer reviews, site visits to other schools or businesses, or seek help from a group familiar with your contractor or the service in question.

THE LAST RESORT

One of the first signs that your relationship with a contractor is on shaky ground is that you find yourself reviewing the terms of the formal contract. It has been my experience that the termination of a major contract happens on a "slowly, slowly, then suddenly" basis. The cancellation of an agreement should never be a surprise to either party.

Talk to your legal counsel to work out a plan to move the process forward, while at the same time ensuring that you have a backup plan ready. Timing of the termination is critical, but you may not always have control of this aspect. Be prepared and do not drag out the termination period, as it will be a time of tension with the contractor's staff, suppliers, and the campus community.

LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT PARTNER

All is not lost, even though it might feel that way. Things may not have worked out with a previous contractor. The following may help towards building a productive and sustainable working relationship with a new service provider.

Start with the goal to select a "partner" rather than a contractor, which should be the relationship when it comes to services that are mission critical.

- Invest time understanding and recording what you need in a partner. If you want best in class service, make sure you can articulate what your vision is. You will need to spell this out in your bid documents.
- Spend time getting to know possible bidders before you write the RFP. This is an opportunity to

understand their business values and for you to lay out your vision. Potential bidders need to know what your goals are.

- Do not select a partner based on the lowest price. Your partner must be one who can add value to the service offered, wishes to see your vision come to life, and will bring innovation to your school.
- Ensure that you select the on-site team leads. These are the people who will deliver what is needed and who understand their role in implementing your vision. Do not settle for second best. A partner will work with you. You need to reciprocate by ensuring you are clear in your objectives and that the relationship is worked upon daily. There will be give and take on both sides and each party must feel the "win-win" of the service. Remember, it's a partnership.

Shameless plug — the C3X Expo provides an excellent venue for schools to seek new partners who can bring innovation, service performance and a wealth of experience that you may be seeking. Join us in Las Vegas this November and chat with our Business Partners in person.

One final thought: Many services on a campus community can be performed by a contractor but you must never contract out your school's reputation. Selection of a partner may be time-consuming, but the investment is worth it. ■

ED KANE is retired from a 30-year career in Auxiliary Services.

Contract Management Tips

BY MELINDA WALLACE

Monitor Your Contracts — Often, long-term contract deliverables are not closely monitored, and the vendor is not contacted until an issue has arisen. Track contract deliverables and be ready to follow up if deliverables are not being met, following up with vendors as soon as possible. Implement status updates if necessary to stay informed on contracts.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate! — If it is determined that services are not being performed as specified, address the issue as soon as possible. Vendors want to do a great job and the sooner issues are brought to their attention, the sooner they can address them.

Involve Procurement Early — If there is dissatisfaction with the performance of the contract, contact Procurement Services and allow them to intervene and join in the discussions to resolve the issue. Having Procurement at the table emphasizes the urgency and importance of resolving the issue and often results in a resolution without having to terminate the contract completely.

Put it in Writing — Documenting the discussions that take place to reach a resolution will be beneficial to the institution as well as the vendor. It also ensures that the expectations and deliverables are clear moving forward. It is especially important to document and share in writing what has been agreed upon during in-person or Zoom meetings. Also, if the resolution deviates from the terms stated in the existing contract, your legal department should be involved with the contract amendment and execution.

Last Resort — While neither party purposely wants to terminate a contract, provisions should be put in place before the contract is initially signed that allows for termination. Termination by either party should include a notice, and the cost of services that have already been rendered will be due. ■

MELINDA A. WALLACE, ED.D. is Director of Enterprise Operations Administration and Contracts at the University of Alabama. She has worked in higher ed in contract management negotiations for the past 10 years and prior to that worked 15 years in the private sector in the contract negotiation space.

and whatever other content fills our lives and just be present with yourself. This may take some practice because we have all been taught that busy is good and doing two things at once is twice as good. It is worth it. We all want to be liked and understood and being inundated with the things we like and understand can help us feel good. Make sure you like and understand yourself. That is the kind of thing that only happens through your own intentionality and reflection. Try it: you will not be disappointed.

11. Share. Even though you did the hard work, berries are for sharing. Share the bounty. Share the credit. Show everyone else in your life what they mean to you by sharing those things that you create, grow, and harvest. The berries will even taste better and ultimately it is all made more valuable by involving others.

12. Take care of yourself. You are not doing anyone any good if you fall down in the woods and are unable to get up. When you are done working, clean yourself up, tend your wounds,

and get yourself a cold beverage of your choice. Be proud of your accomplishments and enjoy. There is a time for everything, including you.

It is all good stuff, and the berries are not too bad either. Tune in next week and I will tell you my story about Life and a Box of Chocolates. Until then ... I look forward to seeing everyone at C3X in Vegas. ■

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8 Tips

for Successfully Negotiating Food Service Contracts with Higher Education Institutions

BY JEFF DOVER

Negotiating contracts with higher education accounts is similar to negotiating any food service account. The following are eight helpful tips for successfully negotiating contracts.

1. Negotiation of the Proposal, Including the Financial Proposal

Once a contractor is selected as the preferred proponent, the institution may wish to negotiate some elements of the proposal. Such negotiation is fine; however, it is important to consider any implications of the negotiation on the financial case for the contractor. When preparing a proposal, a contractor determines

what the opportunity is worth and what they are willing to pay for the opportunity. Capital expenditures are deducted from the total a contractor is willing to pay with the remainder available for commissions and other compensation. Implications such as enhanced prescription of sustainable packaging and operating practices, food service exclusions, new competition on campus, hyper-local sourcing, or changes to hours of operation or staffing levels can affect the business case. A contractor has a right to adjust their financial proposal during negotiations to address changes to their business case.

2. Win/Win/Win Situations

When working with higher education institutions negotiating food service contracts, I tell them they want a win/win/win situation for the institution, the contractor, and most importantly, the institution's population — the students.

From an institution's perspective, the contract must alleviate their primary concern: Solving any challenges provided by the previous contract, providing capital, providing a revenue stream to cover ancillary services department operating costs or other expenses, etc. It is important that any challenges the institution had with the previous contract are resolved, even if the previous

contract was with the same contractor. The contract must give the institution comfort that the contractor will meet their needs. If agreed to by the contractor, the proposal and its commitments may be included as an appendix to the contract. If, for confidentiality or other reasons, the contractor does not want the contract included, commitments made by the contractor in the proposal should be included in the contract body.

From the contractor's perspective, it is imperative that they have a solid business case. A contractor with a profitable operation is a better partner and more likely to agree to institution proposals that might not make business sense (e.g., opening an outlet late for evening students when the business case does not support it). Eroding the business case over the course of the contract is problematic.

From the institution's population (students, staff, and faculty) perspective, the food service operations should meet their needs providing the products they desire, where they want it, and when they want it — at an appropriate price.

When the contractor and the institution negotiate with a win/win situation as the goal, better partnerships result.

3. The Institution May Require Multiple Parties to Sign Off

Unlike many food service accounts, institutions have complicated organizational structures. A contractor may negotiate with ancillary services after which further edits may be required by the finance, information technology, sustainability, and other departments. The key is patience. Again, any changes that impact the business case should be addressed and, if required, the financial compensation adjusted.

4. Exclusions to the Agreement

The contract should spell out what exclusions exist to the food service contract. This may include other food service operations on campus (e.g., student pubs, leased outlets, etc.) as well as on campus catering. If the contract does not allow for additional food service outlets on campus to be operated by another contractor, tenant, or the institution itself and such an outlet later opens, it would be reasonable for the food service contractor to renegotiate the agreement (e.g., commissions) as the business case has changed. Similarly, the contract may include right of first refusal for any new operations developed over the course of the agreement.

I caution institutional clients to minimize the number of exclusions to the food service contract to maximize the contractor's business case (the win/win situation discussed above).

5. On-Site Management

Often, the success of a food service contract is tied to the on-site management (e.g., General Manager, Executive Chef). Depending on the amount of capital contributed by a food service contractor, contracts may be up to 10 years in duration or longer. It would be unreasonable to expect the original on-site management to remain over the life of the contract; however, the institution will want to retain the right to approve key on-site managers for the duration of the contract.

6. Future Developments

To simplify contracts, I tend to recommend potential future events that could impact the food service business case be handled carefully. For example, if an institution plans to open a new residence where students will be required to purchase a mandatory meal plan in the third year of a contract, but the timing is not guaranteed, the contract should reflect this. If the residence does not open as planned, the contractor has a case to renegotiate commissions. Contracts in such cases should consider the institution as it currently exists and firm future developments only. The contract may be structured to allow for changes if a certain development occurs (e.g., increased commission rates if a new residence opens with students required to purchase meal plans).

7. Minimum Required Hours of Operation

The contract should include the minimum required hours of operation for each food service outlet and residence dining hall. The minimum hours of operation should include holidays, exam periods, and operations outside the typical academic year. The contractor should be able to operate, as desired, in addition to these minimum hours. I often caution clients to be reasonable when determining the minimum hours of operation.

8. Pouring Rights Agreements Clause

Institutions are increasingly entering pouring rights agreements. Such agreements often benefit the institution; however, it should be noted that they erode the contractor's business case. The contractor must purchase beverages at the contracted rate, which is typically much greater than what the contractor has negotiated with beverage providers. If a pouring rights agreement is to end during the food service contract, I often recommend clients include alternate commission rates should the institution not enter a new pouring rights agreement. In some cases, the return to the institution ends up being greater. If such a clause is included in the contract, the institution has a third option other than Coca-Cola® and Pepsi® to consider. In such cases, the contractor or institution may have to compensate

other institution departments (e.g., complimentary cases of energy drinks for the athletics department as part of the pouring rights agreement).

Similarly, if an institution does not have a pouring rights agreement and has not included in the RFP its intention to enter one and, during the contract, does so, it would be reasonable for the food service contractor to renegotiate the agreement as its business case has changed.

In conclusion, the contract should contemplate any potential changes to the food service contractor's business case over the course of the agreement and indicate what will happen should they occur. Ideally, the food service contractor does not have a reason to renegotiate the agreement, commissions, etc. as any such changes and how they will be handled are detailed in the contract. Contract negotiations should be approached in as open and transparent a process as possible, to form a mutually beneficial partnership.

SUCCESSFULLY TERMINATING A CONTRACT

Fortunately, it is rare that an institution or food service contractor wants to terminate a contract during the course of an agreement, though this does occur. The contract should spell out how and when a contract can be terminated by either party. Such a termination clause should allow, except for termination for cause, the time for the food service contractor to wind down operations and/or the institution to secure another contractor to ensure ongoing operations.

At the termination date, payments will likely be due to the institution and, in some cases, the contractor (e.g., unamortized capital paid by the contractor). Such payments should be made by the parties promptly.

Assuming a contract is terminated, I recommend the food service contractor operate professionally. Higher education food services are a big, small town. How a contractor operates once a contract has been terminated is important and will likely be shared with colleagues at other institutions. During the termination period, food service contractors should continue to provide quality products and service. It should be noted that the major contract caterers operating at institutions of higher education in the United States are professionals and, in most cases, do not let their disappointment in having a contract terminated (or having to execute a contract termination clause) show to the institution's community. This is also the case when an incumbent food service contractor is informed that they will not be the contractor for the next contract. ■

JEFF DOVER is President of fsSTRATEGY, a consulting firm specializing in strategic advisory services for the hospitality industry, with an emphasis on food and beverage. Jeff is a Certified Management Consultant and a member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants.

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RESILIENCE

Creating a Resilient Mindset

BY VICTORIA LIM

There are quite a few words that most have used to describe the past several years, but the description Shola Richards uses is likely pretty common.

"It's been awful," he says. "Think about some of the things we've had to sacrifice. We're talking about people's most meaningful moments of our lives: weddings, funerals, births of children. People passing away alone and having to deal with all of that without the benefit of physical touch because pre-vaccine, no one knew if this would kill us. Such deep loneliness."

While the world has seemingly moved on to the new normal now that it appears the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic is over, Richards believes many people are doing so with high functioning anxiety. He says it can make it difficult to continue to show up to work, to bring their best selves to campus and their families.

"It's due to the unprecedented nature of it. No one alive has experienced a global pandemic before. And thinking about how a lot of professionals take pride in being able to control their environment — that was completely stripped away from them," he

says. "There was so much uncertainty about the dangers — how it would affect jobs, students, and campus life."

When compared to 9/11, that horrific event universally brought people together. But the uncertainty that lingers even today with the pandemic makes the situation more complex and challenging to work through and progress. In addition to COVID-19, divisions across the country, the day-to-day struggle to balance work, life, caregiving, parenting and mental health can be overwhelming.

But it can be done by building unshakeable strength. Richards calls this "Unstoppable Resilience." The author of *Making Work Work* and *Go Together*, Richards is a workplace engagement expert who defines resilience as the ability to bounce back from challenges and difficult circumstances. He says there are quite a few misconceptions as to what that really means.

"A lot of people look at it as you have to be tough, grit your teeth, fight through it, suck it up, have a stiff upper lip — all of this is nonsense," Richards says. "It's not about toughing it out or being the



A SELF-DESCRIBED “KINDNESS EXTREMIST,” RICHARDS PLANS TO TAP INTO HIS OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS THAT HE PROMISES WILL BE RELATABLE. HIS GOAL IS FOR C3X ATTENDEES TO LEAVE WITH KEYS TO CREATING A RESILIENT MINDSET, A STRATEGY THAT CAN BE USED FOR ANY CHALLENGE — PROFESSIONALLY, PERSONALLY OR OTHERWISE — AND THREE PERSONALIZED COMMITMENTS TO BUILD ON WHAT THEY LEARN.

person who feels the least pain in the room. Are you prioritizing rest? Are you taking care of your mental health? Are you doing the hard things most humans neglect?”

He admits emerging from the last couple of years have been eye opening and challenging for him. He says he’s also felt anxious and scared, especially when it comes to the incivility of the country. That aspect affected him so deeply that he wrote a now-viral post on Facebook in 2020 about why he will not walk alone in his own neighborhood. It was meant only for his friends, but it reached millions

of people at the time and gained national media attention when social justice issues and concerns were on the rise.

“I feel an added challenge for people in marginalized communities. People who are BIPOC, part of the LGBTQ+ community, people with different physical abilities, neurodivergent — there’s a lot that makes things uniquely even more challenging to show up as your best self. Because you’re dealing with all of the challenges everyone else is dealing with plus the additional challenges. Think about the Asian American population and how the racism against

them has spiked after harmful rhetoric around COVID,” he says. “That viral post reminded me of how we can honor our shared humanity more often and hopefully [talking about resilience] will be the gateway to do that [for NACAS].”

Human nature is often the barrier to unshakeable strength. Richards says as humans we are wired to find comfort, that some are more comfortable when they’re struggling. He confessed he was once this type of person.

“There can be a comfort in having people feel sorry for them, or comfort in using challenges as a reason to not do something,” he says. “If something happens, it’s easy to complain about it, easier to not take control of the things you have control over and that’s what I feel is one of the most powerful things you can do: realize it’s hard and the hard part is temporary. If you can push past the hard part, there’s so much beauty on the other side.”

The steps to push through can be learned and become second nature. Richards believes by developing a set of tools, it can redesign or rewire a mind and become a default process to bounce back. Rather than a switch, Richards likens resilience to a dial, enabling a person the ability to recognize when they’re at a rough moment, giving themselves time to wallow but not stay stuck. And he emphasizes the need to recognize not all challenges are equal.

“The resilience needed to deal with the death of a child is completely different than the resilience you need for a bad performance review. They’re not the same thing. It’s tapping into the same concepts, but that’s why it’s a dial, not a switch,” he says. “You know people who will bounce back in powerful ways. And people who stay stuck on small slights and can’t move past them. Will you be the person who holds on to the tiniest things or the person overcoming big things in their life to move past it?”

A self-described “kindness extremist,” Richards plans to tap into his own personal experiences and reflections that he promises will be relatable. His goal is for C3X attendees to leave with keys to creating a resilient mindset, a strategy that can be used for any challenge — professionally, personally or otherwise — and three personalized commitments to build on what they learn.

“It’s one of those skills I feel everyone can use,” he says. “That’s why resilience is such a powerful topic. Until you die, there will be no time in your life you won’t need to lean on those tools from beginning to the very end.” ■

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



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and faculty feel more connected to the food they eat in the dining hall.

"We're just excited to have fresh produce that is created here locally. It really feeds into what we want to do as a campus in our sustainability efforts: to make sure students are aware of how far that food traveled and the fact that we didn't have to ship it in from somewhere."

— Glenn Loughridge, Auburn University Director of Campus Dining & Concessions

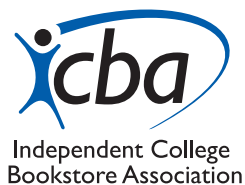
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I'm Jon Bibo, the Chief Executive Officer of ICBA.

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Charlie Sull will share more details about his research and a framework for how to improve your workplace culture at his C3X keynote speech on Monday, November 14.



Why Toxic Culture Matters

BY VICTORIA LIM

Remote working and higher pay have certainly been factors attracting employees to new jobs the past two years or so. But the number one reason credited for the Great Resignation is toxic culture. MIT conducted research into the mass movement of employees, led by researcher Charlie Sull, the CultureX co-founder, and a leading expert on toxic culture, who will be the Monday C3X Keynote Speaker. Sull recently shared some insights on his findings and gave an insight on what he'll bring to conference attendees.

WHAT IS "TOXIC CULTURE?"

From one perspective, toxic culture is the feeling you get when you are viscerally negatively emotionally impacted by work, and you cannot help but take the bad feeling home with you. Toxic culture violates your sense of right and wrong. It has a strong moral and emotional component, as well as a professional one. Empirically, our research at MIT has identified

the five topics that drive this powerful negative reaction most reliably for employees. The "Toxic 5" are non-inclusiveness, disrespect, unethical behavior, cutthroat competition, and abusive behavior.

WHO EXPERIENCES IT? WHO SUFFERS THE MOST FROM IT?

More than 10 million Americans experience toxic culture every day. Women and minorities are disproportionately affected. This is unfortunately how our society is structured. Hopefully by quantifying and publicizing the negative impact certain groups encounter we can make some progress. But toxicity affects all groups.

WHAT'S THE CAUSE? HOW AND WHY DOES IT START AND GROW?

There are many causes. Bad leadership usually plays a role, either at the top team or distributed leader level; leaders embodying and promoting



THEY WILL UNDERSTAND WHY TOXIC CULTURE MATTERS, HOW TO SPOT IT, AND HOW TO FIX IT. IF THEY ARE SENIOR ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO AUTHORIZE A STUDY OF THEIR CULTURES TO SEE WHAT THE LEVEL OF TOXICITY IS AND WHAT CULTURAL CHALLENGES THEY HAVE AND BEGIN IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER LEADERS — CANDID DISCUSSIONS AND MEASUREMENT ARE CRUCIAL STEPS TO PROGRESS. IF THEY ARE MORE JUNIOR, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A STRONG BUSINESS CASE TO LEADERS AS TO WHY THIS ISSUE MATTERS AND HOPEFULLY GET IT ON THE AGENDA.

— CHARLIE SULL ON WHAT HE HOPES TO BRING TO THE NACAS AUDIENCE AT C3X

unhealthy social norms. A stressful work environment is also a powerful driver since peoples' worst instincts will often be brought out when they are stressed. But even with strong leadership and healthy work environments, toxic culture will arise naturally in large organizations. Even in the healthiest large organizations in America, toxicity exists for a non-trivial percentage of employees and is often a leading driver of attrition.

YOUR RESEARCH FOUND COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO HAVE THE HEALTHIEST CULTURES. HOW? IN WHAT WAY?

On Glassdoor, academics and university researchers are considerably less likely to cite toxicity in their employer reviews than other groups. Toxicity varies considerably by organization, though, and not all universities will fit this pattern.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY CULTURE?

Culture can succeed and break down on hundreds of dimensions, some of which will matter more than others depending on the circumstance. For the purposes of this keynote, a healthy culture is one where few employees negatively cite toxicity when asked for candid feedback about their employer. Toxicity can be measured as the "Toxic 5" using the AI my company and research body, CultureX, developed at MIT. It reads employee reviews at scale. We use it to identify toxicity based on millions of employee reviews on Glassdoor, and it can also be employed for individual organizations.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

In large organizations, healthy culture comes from smart, empathetic, capable leadership combined with strong cultural measurement systems. Employees, of course, also have a responsibility to uphold these healthy social norms and values.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO A HEALTHY CULTURE?

Leadership apathy, distraction, ignorance, carelessness, incompetence, a breakdown of strong measurement systems, or an active attitude of disregard for the employee. Resources are not a huge barrier — a strong culture can be cheap to cultivate. Excessive amounts of workplace stress also strain a culture and often lead to toxicity.

WE'RE SEEING THE GREAT RESIGNATION, AN INCREASED FOCUS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI), AND NEW GENERATIONS OF THE WORKFORCE'S INTOLERANCE FOR BAD LEADERS AND WORKPLACES. IS THIS TURNAROUND BY ORGANIZATIONS (OR AWARENESS OF IT) BECAUSE ORGANIZATIONS DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER OR BECAUSE THEY'RE NOW BEING FORCED TO DEAL WITH IT?

The causes of the Great Resignation are not entirely clear to anyone, I think. The sudden re-evaluation of work in the era of COVID doubtlessly played a large role, and progressive attitudes among younger generations may have contributed, although older employees also participate in the great resignation. Whatever the reason, employees have demonstrated very little patience for toxicity during the Great Resignation, although it was probably also important before we had the tools to measure it at scale.

As for whether organizations are actually addressing toxicity en masse, that remains to be seen. There are considerable reasons for pessimism during the recession, as the labor market eases up and leadership becomes focused on priorities besides the employee experience.

My hope is at least that there is more awareness of toxicity, now. There is more knowledge of why this matters and how exactly it works, and that

knowledge can be used to build a strong business case as well as a moral case for addressing toxicity, along with data-driven and anecdotal cases. People like Brené Brown and Adam Grant have a huge audience and are getting the idea of empathetic leadership across to organizational leaders in an effective way. My main contribution is installing good measurement systems for researching this at scale, which would not have been possible even a few years ago because of the state of AI and the lack of large-scale employee review platforms. What cannot be measured cannot be fixed.

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS?

Toxicity is the #1 driver of attrition during the Great Resignation, the #1 most powerful driver of a negative Glassdoor review (which has all sorts of implications for engagement, employee satisfaction, and talent attraction) and increases the odds of employees suffering a major disease by 35% to 55%. It affects more than 10 million Americans every day, making them dread going into work. It is a business issue and a moral issue. Or rather, it is a moral issue with an incredibly strong business case.

WHAT TAKEAWAYS CAN THE C3X AUDIENCE EXPECT FROM YOUR PRESENTATION?

They will understand why toxic culture matters, how to spot it, and how to fix it. If they are senior organizational leaders, they will be able to authorize a study of their cultures to see what the level of toxicity is and what cultural challenges they have and begin important discussions with other leaders — candid discussions and measurement are crucial steps to progress. If they are more junior, they will be able to make a strong business case to leaders as to why this issue matters and hopefully get it on the agenda. ■

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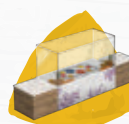
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Student Author Contest Winners

Through the NACAS Student Author Contest, NACAS encourages students to reflect on the college/university issues they consider to be most important. This year's winners reflected on the various ways auxiliary services have been able to continue serving the needs of students as they attempt to return to normal in the post COVID-19 era.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAPHNE CHAN

SFU Ancillary Service Creates a Platform for Students to Engage in the Community

BY DAPHNE CHAN

Being a fourth-year student in the Faculty of Environment, I always try to find a way to engage in projects that could benefit the local community. However, when some of my classes switched back to remote learning, I found it challenging to engage with fellow peers online. Especially on days when I have to attend both in-person and virtual lectures, it is hard to catch up with friends or be involved in ongoing projects on campus. Fortunately, SFU Ancillary Services understands the significance of allowing students to be part of the solutions to

issues, such as the devastating floods that hit BC in December. In December 2021, SFU Ancillary Services collaborated with the Simon Fraser Student Society and Graduate Student Society to respond to affected neighbourhoods. They have set up several donation stations across all three campuses, allowing students to be involved in this response. They also announced their response on primary social media platforms, including Zoom, to reach out to students who had been living on their campus. This flood relief response helped our neighbours with food and other

necessities and successfully united students and faculty members during the pandemic when most of us could only meet on Zoom. However, the power of the flood relief response does not stop there. It has also touched many of our hearts. I am so lucky to be part of a student group, the Fair Trade Ambassador Program, which voluntarily spread the news around campus and answered students' questions. We also posted photos of the donation stations on our social media platforms and got many direct messages from our followers, including SFU students, SFU



graduates, and residents in UniverCity, asking about the collected types of essentials.

Besides supporting our neighbours, SFU continuously implements solutions to tackle climate change

at a local scale. For example, after the first move of phasing out all beverages that come in single-use plastic containers in 2021, SFU Foods introduced Mugshare in the Renaissance Café — one of our historic coffee spots at Simon Fraser University. Mugshare allows students to enjoy their drinks sustainably. All they have to do is ask the staff for a clean mug with \$5 deposits at the cashier. They receive their \$5 deposits back after returning the mug to the cafe. This simple solution is easy for students to participate without any apps and extra time waiting in the queue.

It is hard to leave with an empty stomach when students get on campus. However, carrying a burning hot food box to class, like the curry chicken rice from SFU Dining Hall, is another issue. At the same time, options seem limited when most students only have a 10-minute break between classes. Luckily, Sally the Robot is finally running as a new salad spot for students in the South Hall of the Academic Quadrangle (AQ). It is 100% self-served while providing fresh ingredients for students to customize their bowls. Another new spot in the West Mall Centre and Discovery 1 is called SmartVending. Students can access affordable

and nutritious meals 24/7 while learning on campus. The last smart-vending spot is called My Lil' Health Bot, which provides medical assistance to students. It is located the South Hall of the Academic Quadrangle (AQ).

SFU Ancillary Services have been aiming to provide affordable food options on campus, as well as sustainable cutlery. In April, SFU Food put ChopValue bins in the most common catering area on SFU Burnaby campus, including Mackenzie Café, Maggie Benston Centre Food Court, and Student Union Building. These bins help SFU to minimize waste with more than 100,000 chopsticks collected. In addition, used chopsticks will be sent to microfactories to support job openings while ChopValue guarantees the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the production process. This simple step seems like nothing but is a stepping stone for SFU to tackle climate change at a global scale, with the help of students and faculty members.

SFU Ancillary Services have been actively partnering with student groups and school departments to create a unique network between SFU students, faculty members, alumni, and the local

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community. I am glad to be able to follow their lead and spend my last year with meaningful ongoing projects. ■

SOURCES:
<http://www.sfu.ca/dashboard/faculty-staff/news/2021/12/sfu-community-rallies-to-support-bc-flood-relief-response.html>
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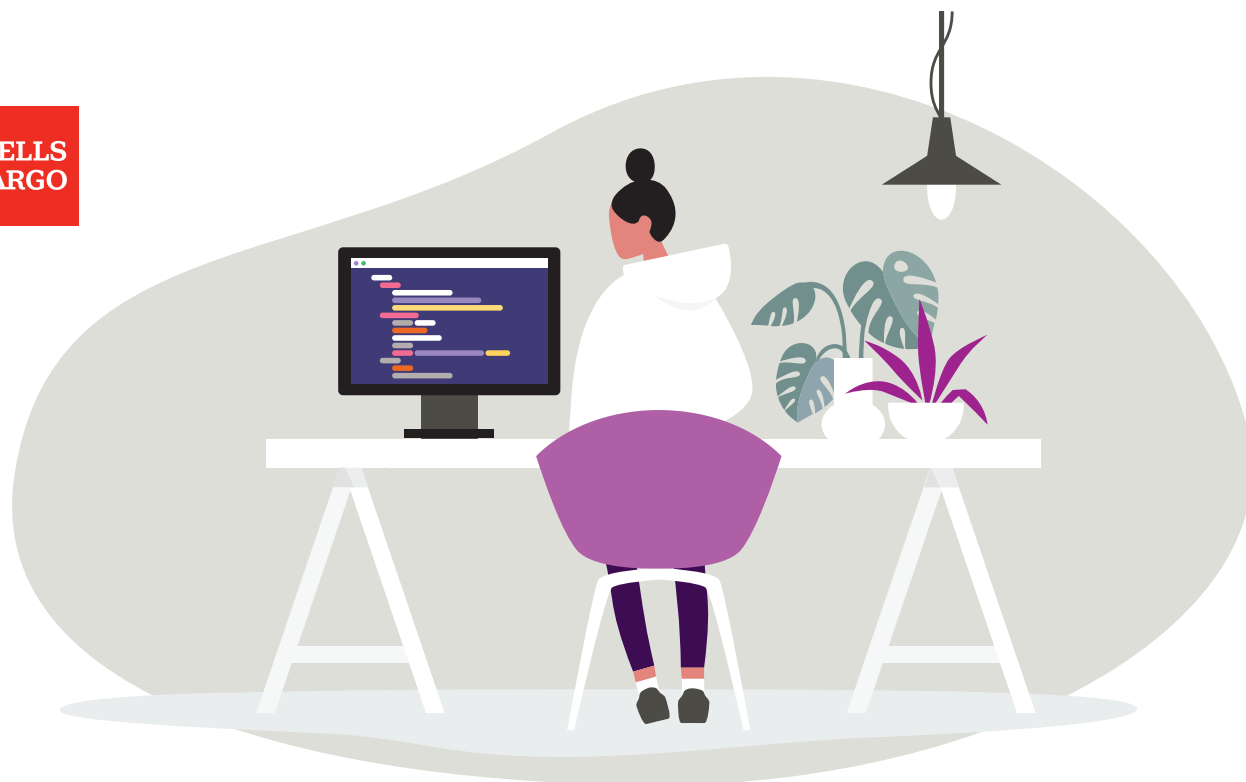
DAPHNE CHAN is a student at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada

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Boston College Counters Supply Chain Issues in Dining Halls by Placing an **Emphasis on Local Sourcing**

BY KYLE POWERS

The 2021-2022 academic year at Boston College has seen less COVID related restrictions for students due to a vaccination rate of 99% within the Boston College community. Classes are entirely back in person and on campus clubs are permitted to host events again. Social life has safely opened back up thanks to a combination of testing procedures and high vaccination rates.

The student body has spent the year adjusting to and making the most of the “new normal” college experience. However, faculty and staff, specifically within Boston College Dining Services (BCDS) have faced a new set of challenges as the campus community adjusts to this “new normal.”

According to *The New York Times* writer Peter Goodman, a normal (in terms of pre-COVID normal) supply chain is unlikely to exist in the chaos that is the year 2022. Goodman writes how, “the very concept of a return to normalcy has given way to a begrudging acceptance that a new normal may be unfolding.” This “new normal” involves many factors that further complicate the operations within BCDS. The post-COVID supply chain is less reliable than pre-COVID and results in more expensive food items. Purchased items may arrive late, or not at all. Reliable producers may no longer be reliable. However, although the reliability of sourcing changed, the demand for food remained. Facing this new supply chain and the complications that arise from it, BCDS needed to adjust to continue servicing the 9,445 undergraduate students that rely on them.

In this year of supply chain issues, BCDS has adjusted by placing an emphasis on regional sourcing. The FRESH to Table program highlights BCDS’s commitment to local sourcing. FRESH to Table promotes fairly traded, regional, equitable, sustainable, and healthy food through purchasing, outreach, and menus. FRESH to Table encourages students to eat intuitively while focusing on growing community awareness for regional food systems, food literacy, and food justice. Unfortunately, Boston College’s COVID regulations halted FRESH to Table events for the academic year 2020-2021. Programs such as FRESH to Table depend largely on continuity and momentum. For new and experimental programs, a one-year hiatus can often end the program entirely. However, BCDS is far too committed to sustainability to allow that to happen. BCDS has revitalized the FRESH to Table by hiring interns and assigning staff to plan and execute FRESH to Table demonstrations on campus.

FRESH to Table demonstrations allow for students to try a free sample of a dish that highlights ingredients that meet the FRESH to Table parameters. To be certified as FRESH to Table, dishes must meet at least two of the five FRESH





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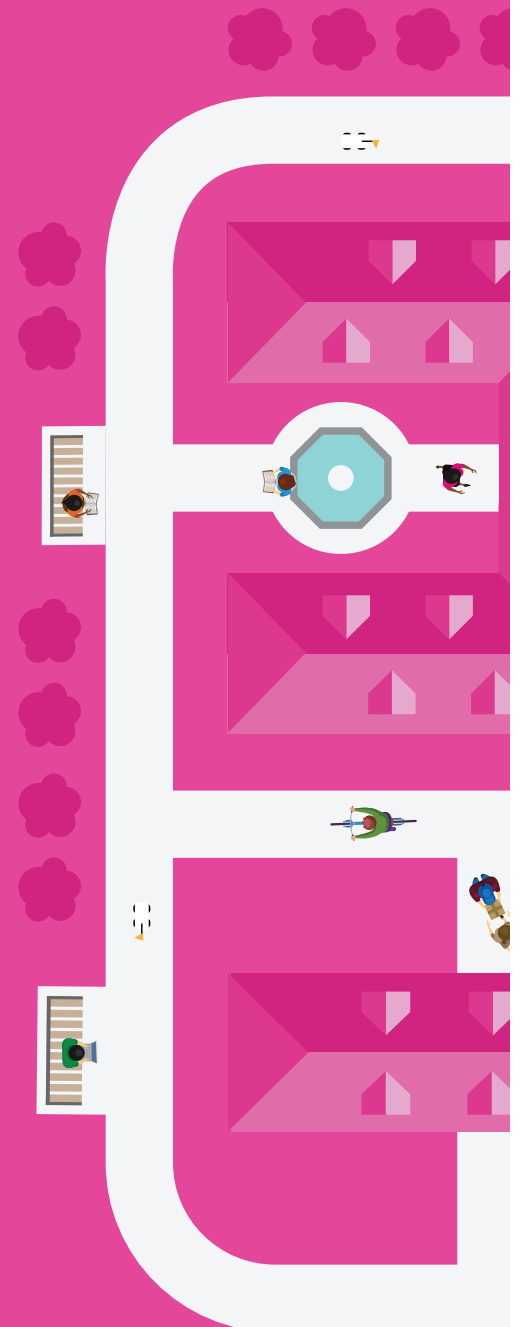
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F R E S H



Lentil Shepherd's Pie with Carrots and Potatoes from Ward's Berry Farm

Jim and Bob Ward run Ward's Berry Farm, covering 150 acres in Sharon, Massachusetts. Running since 1982, it is the last commercial farm in the area. All of the crops on the farm are hand harvested. Ann Ward uses their harvests in her homemade baking that they sell at their farm-stand.



Sharon, MA



to Table parameters (Fairly Traded, Regional, Equitable, Sustainable, Healthy). Additionally, interested students can speak with the Sustainability Interns at BCDS to learn about the importance and benefits sourcing motivated by the FRESH to Table parameters. FRESH to Table demonstrations allow for BCDS to test new dishes, with the aim of adding them to the permanent menu rotation, therefore increasing regional sourcing in the dining halls.

In this academic year, BCDS has hosted six FRESH to Table demonstrations. Through these demonstrations, BCDS has sourced ingredients from a variety of different regional farms and equitable or local businesses. One of the main producers highlighted in FRESH to Table demonstrations is Ward's Berry Farm. Jim and Bob Ward run Ward's Berry Farm, which covers 150 acres in Sharon, Massachusetts. Ward's Berry farm has been running since 1982, and it is the last commercial farm in the Sharon area. All the crops on the farm are hand harvested.

Additionally, Ann Ward uses their harvests in her homemade baking that they sell at their farm-stand. By highlighting the stories of family-owned farms BCDS aims to raise awareness about the importance of supporting small businesses within food systems, while also directly supporting these businesses through purchasing their products. Ward's Berry products have been used in

Which FRESH parameters did this producer meet? Look at the check marks to find out!

fairly traded regional equitable sustainable healthy

F R E S H



Thai Curry Monkfish Bowl

Served over jasmine rice with baby bok choy, this dish will feature sustainable, ethical and regional monkfish from the fishing vessel Francis Dawn in George's Bank.

The Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) is dedicated to the resilience of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and the communities that depend on it. They support solutions that will broadly benefit the bioregion and its diverse communities over generations to come.



George's Bank



www.gmri.org

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many FRESH to Table Demonstrations, such as BCDS's Lentil Shepherd's Pie.

In its most recent and complex FRESH to Table demonstration BCDS partnered with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute to promote regional, ethical, and sustainable seafood sourcing. Although seafood is already a more sustainable and eco-friendly protein choice than poultry or beef; BCDS is always looking for ways to be the most sustainable and ethical possible. BCDS chose to use this FRESH to Table demonstration to feature a Thai Curry Monkfish Bowl.

Monkfish is a severely underutilized species of fish with a taste and texture profile extremely similar to lobster. By choosing to source Monkfish, especially

in larger quantities such as the amount necessary for a college dining hall, BCDS helps to protect fisheries from over harvesting popularized species. The monkfish for this dish was sourced from the fishing vessel Francis Dawn in George's Bank, which is located off the coast of Massachusetts. By sourcing this ingredient from a local fishery, BCDS helps to cut the environmental cost of transportation of goods.

This demonstration was a great success. BCDS sustainability interns handed out more than 65 free samples of the dish and educated students on the background of the dish and the environmental importance of the FRESH to Table Program. Additionally, BCDS records selling 50 servings of the dish in the dining hall the night of the demonstration. Chefs and production managers at Boston College are currently working on the logistics of making this dish a menu item in consistent and regular menu rotation for the academic year 2022-2023.

BCDS has additionally hosted a campus wide FRESH to Table Culinary Showcase across all three of the main dining halls at Boston College. The Culinary Showcase is an event where all dishes being served in the dining halls will be qualified as FRESH to Table dishes. BCDS has a deep commitment to sustainability shown through the many sustainability programs in place. The FRESH to Table program highlights BCDS's commitment to sourcing of ingredients in an ethical, regional, and sustainable manner while also offering BCDS an avenue to adapt to supply chain issues that have arisen as the world adjusts to a "new normal" post COVID-19. ■

KYLE POWERS is a student at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

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A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP



Matt Marcial, CAE, CMP
NACAS CEO

When I think about what differentiates NACAS from other organizations there is one thing that has really resonated with me, and that is leadership. This includes the role that you play as a leader on your campus, mentoring and developing the future leaders on your team, and the many ways you demonstrate your commitment to student success. As we continue to advance our new strategic plan, NACAS is committed to offering relevant learning and leadership development opportunities across all levels of your team to strengthen the necessary competencies across all operational areas. You can expect to see this come to life in new programming and educational offerings that will launch in the next year.

I recently returned from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Annual Meeting & Expo where this year's conference theme was Disruption = Opportunity. The in-person education, networking, and abundance of innovative ideas have left me truly inspired and energized. We have a fantastic C3X Conference & Expo planned for you this November in Las Vegas that is sure to also

have you returning to campus invigorated and full of innovative new ideas and solutions.

It's hard to believe that it has already been one year serving as your CEO. I have had the privilege of meeting so many impressive leaders throughout our NACAS community over the last year. As the days and weeks now seem to be flying by faster than ever, I encourage us all to take time to show gratitude and recognition towards our colleagues and celebrate the wins — big or small, personal or professional. The NACAS staff has recently started sharing our weekly wins and it's amazing how much there is to celebrate that we might normally take for granted. As I reflect on the past 12 months, I would be remiss in not highlighting some of the great work that has been accomplished by NACAS volunteers and staff:

- We've developed our new strategic plan and are hitting the ground running with execution
- We're launching and developing new learning programs and formats
- We're seeing our business partner engagement return to pre-pandemic levels
- We're strengthening the partnership and relationships with the NACAS regions

- We've achieved our institution membership goal of 3% growth

Although we still have a lot to accomplish, we are looking forward to finishing this year strong with a memorable C3X Conference & Expo. As of this writing, our registrations are pacing at 2019 levels (record attendance) and we're close to having a sold-out expo hall! You also won't want to miss an exciting announcement of a new leadership program that aligns with NACAS' commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

If you have not registered yet, visit: www.nacas.org/event/c3x to take advantage of the new 3X pass and save by registering two additional team members with you. If you or your team are unable to join us in person this year, you can still take advantage of the post-conference C3X recorded pass. Also, stay tuned for a new weekly learning series in February where we're taking some of the best conference content to spark engaging discussions and deliver some great takeaways that you can apply on your campus.

See you in Las Vegas! ■



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