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A PINCH-HITTER ON CAMPUS

Neil Markley begins his tenure as NACAS President intent on acting as a caretaker of the association.



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A Return to Normal at the



2022 C3X Conference & Expo

BY ANTONYA ENGLISH

As he stood back and surveyed the crowd gathered in a large ballroom at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, new NACAS President Neil Markley couldn't help but feel a sense of familiarity. The 2022 C3X Annual Conference & Expo was filled with attendees and the excitement could be felt throughout the venue. To Markley and so many others in attendance, it felt like old times.

"I'd say it's back to norm – plus some," Markley said. "We've had a lot more attendees here than last year. It's in line with previous years, but there's just an excitement and an energy. I think people were just excited to be here."

That was the general sentiment among the more than 1,100 institutional and business members who gathered in November at Caesars Palace. The ability to gather again in person, seeing old friends and meeting new ones, was enough to generate positive vibes throughout the four-day event.

T. Douglas Belcher, CASP, has attended several C3X conferences over the years. The Las Vegas event had the feel of conferences of old.

"Absolutely, I think people are really wanting to come back, and for the most part with all the people that are here I believe they are coming back," said Belcher, Assistant Director of Auxiliary Services at Georgia Gwinnett College. "And they are participating. We are feeling safer, we're without masks, there have been a bunch of hugs, a bunch of kisses on the cheek. People are coming back. This is it!"

As he sat waiting for the start of a keynote address, Belcher said one thing that stood out

at the 2022 C3X was that it included so many new faces.

Seeing so many new people was a positive sign for NACAS and the auxiliary services industry, he said. "I think the new crop of people that are coming in are bringing new ideas," Belcher said. "They are bringing new innovation. A lot of the computer work, where some of the older people were reluctant to make these computer changes, the newer people that are coming in are really focusing on the students and the things that appeal to them."

Hayley Harrell was one of those newcomers. She attended her first C3X hoping to connect and learn more about the industry.

"This is my first conference and I'm also new to auxiliary services, so I feel like I'm just getting my feet wet in the entire area," said Harrell, Marketing and Communications Manager, Auxiliary Marketing, at Central Washington University. "It's been really neat to network and see how other institutions – for me I'm a marketing and communications manager – so to meet other marketing and communications professionals in auxiliary services has been really helpful and eye-opening. I think it's great to network here and just see what other institutions are doing, realizing that our struggles are not our own; they are everybody's struggles right now. I think that's been really eye-opening just to gain that perspective about what the landscape looks like across the country."

The conference included outstanding keynote addresses, in-depth educational sessions and

networking opportunities – including business partners who had a chance to showcase some of the latest in goods and services to help auxiliary services professionals continue to meet student needs and enrich the campus experience.

"For us, there are a lot of different goals," said Santana Wilkins with Aramark Collegiate Hospitality. "One, it's connecting with our region, connecting with the people that come. We also like to introduce new flavors and new foods, so we're always looking to expand people's palate. It's always interesting and fun to be able to connect with our community, connect with people that are not only vendors, but also prospects and clients."

Wilkins said the crowded Expo Hall was evidence things are getting back to some semblance of normalcy post-COVID.

"I've been to a couple of different conferences and the number of attendees has absolutely grown from the last couple of years," she said. "I feel like people are hungry to come back and to connect. I keep using that word, but I feel like it's big. People are definitely hungry for connection."

C3X also included some old favorites, including the Flip-A-Coin event which raised \$17,000 on site for the NACAS Foundation.

The 2023 C3X Conference & Expo will be held in Toronto, Canada. ■

ANTONYA ENGLISH is a Senior Editor at Naylor Association Solutions.



ENRICHING THE
CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

A ‘Pinch-Hitter’ on Campus



From left to right: Kelly Kaslar, Welcome Center Manager
Neil Markley, Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance
Chris Romo, Culinary Manager, Catering and Concessions

BY VICTORIA LIM

Neil Markley Takes The Helm as NACAS President with a Strong Belief in NACAS and the Auxiliary Profession, determined to support NACAS' strategic plan, as he considers himself to be a caretaker for the year.

It's the career that no one ever dreams of...but for more than two decades Neil Markley has found his time in auxiliary services a "fascinating" success.

Markley, now an Associate Vice President at Sonoma State University (SSU), first heard of the school through friends and visited during a wet, chilly Spring Break.

"I slept in a room without a heater. It rained but there was something about the campus that was really cool," he recalled.

He didn't know what profession he wanted to pursue, only that he did want to attend college. SSU leapt ahead of the other schools under consideration because of an extraordinary, yet simple, act.

"I had an issue transferring a math class from junior college. While I called other colleges and got a phone tree, I actually had a Sonoma State faculty member call me and work through the thing," Markley said. "I was like, 'Wow, someone on the

faculty called me?' That kind of sealed the deal for me. They were a small but growing campus. Through friends I also learned the administration was fairly new and had a great vision for the campus."

He transferred to the school in 1994, graduated in 1996 and stayed to pursue his master's degree. He worked a student job as a manager of the on-campus pub, where he says he got hands-on experience in management and leadership. When he graduated with his master's in 1998, he was offered a full-time role as the special assistant to the Vice President of Administrative Services. From there, he moved into the Director of Conferences and Events job, and then ultimately his current position as Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance.

He equates his job to running a mini-conglomerate: food, retail, housing, parking, dining – a large group of business units that are very different but tied together by one goal: providing the best experience for students.

"I tell my people our job is to increase the value of the students' degree. As they graduate and move out into the world, we need to keep moving to increase the value of their degree," he said.

As a life-long Dodgers fan, he considers auxiliary professionals the "pinch hitters" on campus. When Markley was asked to pinch-hit in student affairs, it turned out to be his favorite time in his career. He oversaw programming, student involvement, clubs, organizations, the recreation center and the creation of a new student center. It felt reminiscent of his time as a student on SSU's campus when he started a fraternity. A highlight was opening the 1,600-seat indoor (5,000-seat outdoor) music center that has hosted acts from Yo-Yo Ma and Liang Liang to Trace Adkins and Andy Grammer.

Combining his student development experience along with his business and leadership



From left to right: Neil Markley, Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance
Alan Murray, Past NACAS President from Sonoma State University



From left to right: Neil Markley, Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance
Doug Boyington, Executive Sous Chef, Holly Galbraith, Culinary Operations Manager
Chris Romo, Culinary Manager, Catering and Concessions, Don Cortes, Executive Chef



From left to right:

1st row below stage: Neil Markley, Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance
 Jenna Spolarich, Student Center and Event Operations Specialist
 Jenna Hennessy, Associate Director, Student Center and Event Operations
 Katherine Conter, Event Operations and Administrative Specialist
 Jessica Way, Managing Director of Entrepreneurial Activities Operations and Administration

2nd row on stage: MJ Boardman, Student Center Student Assistant
 Trent Glenn, Student Center Student Assistant
 Hailee Midgley, Student Center Student Assistant

responsibilities enabled him to move two seemingly disparate (and sometimes competing) worlds in one direction.

"People view the business side as cold money people, and business people view the student affairs side as 'they're bleeding hearts with no concept of money.' I get it, but I don't," he said. "I don't make any more or less money, I make the same salary, but we do it for the students. I think my team on the business side understood that. The team respected the student affairs side. Leveraging the discipline of the business side to put into the student affairs side is really what we tried to do to create efficiencies, manage budgets and plow extra resources towards student development. It worked well."

Whether it's pinch hitting or merging two sides of campus operations, Markley acknowledged auxiliary services can be a mystery, except for those who know all too well — like the members of NACAS. He remembers his first conference in the late '90s in New Orleans, and thanks his work predecessor with introducing him to the organization. He's found it to be led by passionate volunteers and supportive colleagues. He has served as the West region president

and a national board member. While he never aspired to the NACAS president role, he says it has come at the right time.

"I believe in the organization. I believe in the profession. It's the profession nobody dreamed of. That's one of the challenges we have as an auxiliary professional — getting the word out to what we do and what our roles are. Even on our campuses, we're still mysterious," he said.

That's what he says makes the NACAS membership so valuable; the unspoken understanding among members that if everything is going right, there's no chatter. But when something goes wrong, it can become very public.

Markley says his main focus will be supporting NACAS' strategic plan, as he considers himself to be a caretaker for the year to ensure the organization is executing what it should. He noted three priorities: the first, increasing auxiliary professionals' "brand" so their value is more apparent and visible. That leads to advancing those in the profession to help them grow their careers, through professional development, education sessions and conferences. The last priority is enhancing the member experience

by connecting commerce business partners with campuses by boosting knowledge, sharing opportunities between vendors and schools about retail, money-making endeavors, and student services.

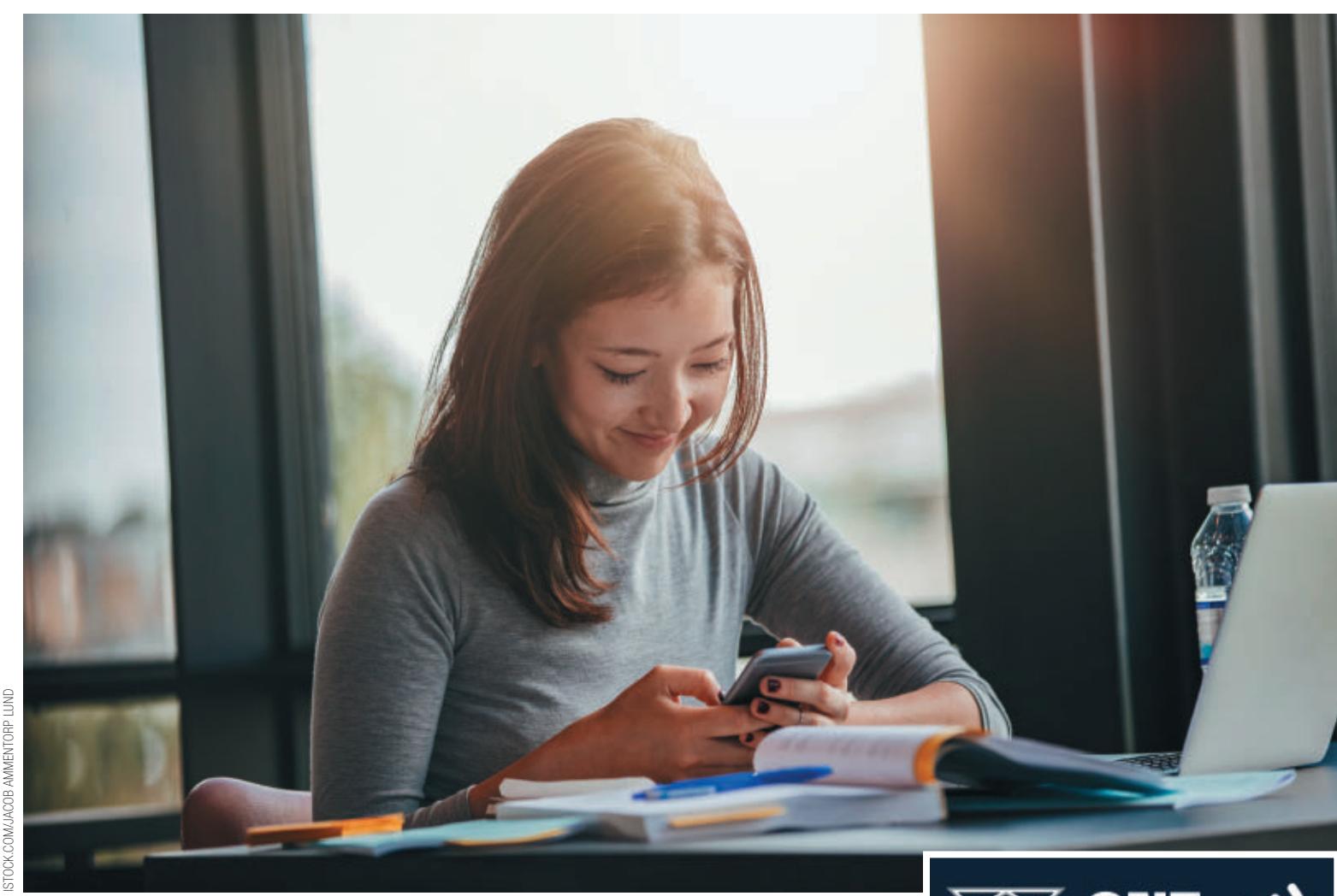
"There's nowhere else that I can think of that can I go and have my peers in one place and be able to share with them and learn from them. As an example, during the pandemic, there were NACAS meetings we almost started as therapy sessions. It's a tremendous support group!" he said. "All of our people dealing with the same issues, all in a state of chaos on campus. One, it's great to know everyone's in the same boat. Two, it's great to share, 'here's what we did, what we're doing,' even if there were no solutions. Just hearing that was great."

The broad and critical mix of responsibilities that fall under auxiliary services reminds him of a recent National Association of College & University Food Services show that he attended. Plant-based burgers garnered a lot of attention, and the show itself didn't cover the breadth and scope of his profession. But that amplified to him how important an organization like NACAS is.

"We're like door locks to bagels-and-lox," he laughed. "That's what we get and it's unique." ■

"I BELIEVE IN THE ORGANIZATION. I BELIEVE IN THE PROFESSION. IT'S THE PROFESSION NOBODY DREAMED OF. THAT'S ONE OF THE CHALLENGES WE HAVE AS AN AUXILIARY PROFESSIONAL — GETTING THE WORD OUT TO WHAT WE DO AND WHAT OUR ROLES ARE. EVEN ON OUR CAMPUSES, WE'RE STILL MYSTERIOUS."

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.



Mobile Credentials— One Giant leap for Xavier

BY BILL MORAN

A famous Ohioan once proclaimed, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." The late Neil Armstrong was describing the first footstep by man on the moon, but he may as well have been describing Xavier University's launch of Mobile ID credentials. It felt daunting and unknown to us going in, but I am here to tell you that we survived, and you can, too. It was a giant leap for us but has allowed us to meet our customers where they are. The following is our story of where we were, where we are today, and how you can get there too.

The last time the university had a major shift in the way identification was handled on campus was in 1996 when we transitioned from a 1D (one-dimensional) barcode to magnetic stripe technology. It took us a long time to get there; mag stripe technology had been available since the early 1960s. Not exactly innovative, but it allowed students to interact with our services in a more secure and convenient manner. Fast forward 23 years to 2019 and we found ourselves in a place where the world is quite literally in the palm of our hands. The cellular



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phone is as ubiquitous as the shirts on our backs. Nearly everyone had one, and it had access to all the information the World Wide Web has to offer, including the ability to store identification and payment information in a highly encrypted way, light years ahead of magstripe technology. Here we were, finding ourselves way behind the times, again.

It was around that time that we heard rumblings of technologies being tested on college campuses that were bringing the identification credential to the users' cell phones. The encryption was state of the art, allowed users to process transactions and make payments in a frictionless manner, and could be delivered securely and remotely to a known device that people would not lose track of (who doesn't know where their cell phone is for more than a few minutes? NO ONE!). We loved the technology. It was innovative and would undoubtedly provide us with a "cool factor" with both existing and prospective students. That said, we were obviously concerned that we would not be able to afford to make the transition and would be stuck playing catch up again.

We began our due diligence and engaged one of our technology partners in site surveys to put together a baseline budget of what it would cost to upgrade all our hardware to accept a credential other than magstripe. Talk about Neil Armstrong – the price was astronomical, and we are a relatively small campus. I proceeded to build a baseline budget for our chief business officer and was pleasantly surprised that he wasn't taken aback by the dollar figure. We then put together a business case that included the aforementioned benefits of moving to this new technology, the tangible and intangible risk factors of not doing it: Namely running out of hardware to support campus operations and not being perceived as secure or innovative. They ranked the request fairly high on the list of technology projects to undertake if funding was available.

Things were coming together, then the COVID-19 pandemic started.

The university went through some very troubling times financially. Significant cuts to operating budgets and employee layoffs ensued. Despite all the promise that the project had just a few months earlier, I knew the price tag to pull off our project and thought that it stood a snowball's chance in you know where of going anywhere anytime soon. I was told to move it to the back burner.

That fall semester in the middle of the pandemic, we welcomed our second largest first-year class in school history. Perhaps everyone was tired of being cooped up with mom and dad and wanted to try to start getting back to normal. With enrollment figures looking very promising, I decided to take a chance and reintroduce the topic to my boss. To my shock he was very open to the idea and asked me to move the project back to the front burner. He didn't have to ask me twice.

I immediately engaged our software partner and asked them to update our quote for the migration. There was still a hefty price tag, but we were able to negotiate a significant discount as they were looking for new partners to expand their product reach. We were also to come to terms on being able to phase in the acquisition and installation of the hardware necessary to make the switch. They realized the large price tag was another barrier of entry to finding new customers. We discussed a very intentional phased approach that was mutually acceptable. I re-engaged the project prioritization group, and all systems were go.

With IT project management leading the charge and a working group consisting of our software partner and key campus stakeholders from Auxiliary Services, IT, Residence Life, Facilities and University Marketing and Communications, we executed on our launch plan. We engaged a pilot group of 60 users to test the new mobile ID, Xavier One Pass, for a month.

I HOPE THAT SHARING XAVIER'S MOBILE CREDENTIALING STORY PROVIDES THE CONFIDENCE THAT YOU TOO CAN STEP OFF THAT LEDGE AND MAKE THE ONE GIANT LEAP FOR YOUR RESPECTIVE CAMPUSES. IT IS WELL WORTH THE RISK AND YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE EXPECTING THAT LEVEL OF SERVICE, WHETHER YOU REALIZE IT OR NOT.

We received feedback, made process improvements, and then expanded the pilot group to 150 people and continued it for another month. We made final adjustments and then launched it live to the general public mid semester per IT's request as it was the optimal time from a technical support perspective.

The day of the launch we had significant interest and adoption. We kept our fingers crossed that the phones wouldn't be ringing off the hook for support, turning our simple card office into a de facto Apple support call center. Those calls never came. It was as smooth as can be. It was a testament to the very methodical project and change management processes we undertook.

Our students are now able to engage with all our services seamlessly through their phone and/or watch: meal plans, retail services, library, rec sports center, athletic events, vending machines, you name it. No digging around to find the card to use, losing track of the card altogether, or waiting in line at the card office for new or replacement cards. A more secure and convenient experience that meets them where they are and is always with them.

We didn't do it the quick way, but we did it the right way, and in the process became the first university in the state of Ohio to make mobile identification available to its students. We thought our students would be over the moon, no pun intended, lining up at our door to thank us for a job well done, but the general theme we heard was, "that's great! It's about time."

I hope that sharing Xavier's mobile credentialing story provides the confidence that you too can step off that ledge and make the one giant leap for your respective campuses. It is well worth the risk and your customers are expecting that level of service, whether you realize it or not. ■

BILL MORAN Is the Senior Director of Auxiliary Services at Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH.

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

Ceja has served in numerous capacities for the organization and is currently the Treasurer for the Board of Directors.



DAVID H. LORD AWARD
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Director - Financial Services & CFO
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This award is designated to a leader in auxiliary services who steps up to make necessary changes for students in our campus communities. The award is intended to showcase members who are benchmarks for the entire Association of outstanding examples of Community Service. The winner has demonstrated an impact made on the nonprofit community/organization.



EDWIN R. GOLDEN AWARD
FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

KRYSTAL BIRD

Assistant Director Strategic Partnerships
Arizona State University

This award was established in 1992 in honor of Edwin R. "Bob" Golden for his foresight in acknowledging the need for attention to issues of cultural diversity in the Association. The purpose of the award is to recognize outstanding campus leadership, activities and/or programs promoting cultural awareness and inclusion. This award recognizes exemplary and outstanding service to cultural awareness in the profession of college auxiliary management and the promotion of inclusion in an on-going fashion, through leadership in the areas of cultural diversity and equality.



MERESE LADSON SCHOLARSHIP

SHARI BENSON

Director - HR & Chief Human Resource Officer
Cal Poly Pomona Foundation

The Ladson Diversity Scholarship was established in 2005 in honor of the late Mereese Ladson, Controller at Brooklyn College (CUNY). Ms. Ladson was a President and long-time leader of NACAS East and a great friend to the entire association. Ms. Ladson's professionalism, commitment to inclusiveness for all, and leadership were sources of inspiration to our members. This scholarship program is intended to further her work to promote the advancement of diverse, career-minded higher education professionals and to enhance their auxiliary services skill and knowledge base through NACAS professional development programs.

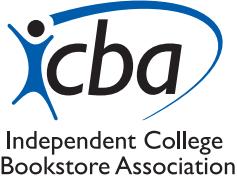


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C3X HIGHLIGHTS







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LSU Dining Opens First-of-its-Kind Mobile Chick-fil-A Pop-Up Kitchen on Campus

LSU becomes the first and only organization to bring this innovative, state-of-the-art food service concept to the public



BY MARGOT HSU CARROLL AND JEFFREY NICE

LSU Dining, part of Chartwells Higher Education, in partnership with LSU Auxiliary Services, LSU Athletics and Chick-fil-A Corporate, has opened a first-of-its-kind mobile Chick-fil-A pop-up kitchen on LSU's campus. The 1,200 square feet, state-of-the-art kitchen is open to guests Monday through Friday as well as on game days and can serve every product on Chick-fil-A's menu.

Since opening this past September, the new pop-up kitchen has been a favorite on campus, servicing roughly 400 to 500 students a day during the week and 4,000 to 5,000 guests on football game day. The kitchen features state-of-the-art equipment and point-of-sales systems capable of accepting all forms of payment, including credit, debit, Tiger cash, and meal plans. With only power and water needed to operate, this full-scale mobile restaurant concept can be assembled and disassembled within 48 hours.

"We've been in talks with Chick-fil-A for years now about getting a new, unique dining concept on campus for students, so when we caught wind of this innovation, we couldn't have been more excited they wanted to partner with us," said Jeffrey Nice, VP of Operations at LSU Dining. "We're not just the first university to test the feasibility of this sort of concept; we're the first and only organization of any kind to be doing this. We're proud of the work we've done and continue to do with the university

and Chick-fil-A, and the feedback we've heard from students and staff on the pop-up kitchen has really validated that."

The pop-up kitchen concept was inspired by a company called FORTS, which stands for fold-out rigid temporary shelters. Until now, fold-out units have been primarily for military purposes and creating makeshift hospitals on the battlefield. Chick-fil-A has teamed up with FORTS and brought partners like LSU Dining to the table to utilize this innovative concept to create a first-of-its-kind, full-service kitchen that's mobile.

"We regularly update the interiors of our Chick-fil-A locations, and we've been looking for a concept that allows us to deliver the same level of customer service we're known for while restaurants are closed for renovations," said Stephanie Rakes, Senior Principal Program Lead at Chick-fil-A. "College students are a tech-savvy, on-the-move demographic, so we thought testing this concept at a university like LSU with a team we trust like LSU Dining was the perfect fit. We're extremely pleased with the results we've seen thus far."

Located between the E. J. Ourso College of Business and LSU College of Engineering, the Chick-fil-A kitchen operates Monday through Friday from 10:30 am through 3:30 pm and on game days, with hours dependent upon start times.

"When the opportunity to pilot this on LSU's campus came up in late summer, we fast tracked several approval processes to have it ready by the first home football game," said Margot Hsu Carroll, Assistant VP of Auxiliary Services at LSU. "It has been great to be able to pilot a food service platform outside of the normal brick-and-mortar model and to have the flexibility to place it along one of the most well-traveled paths of campus, making it convenient for LSU students walking between classes." ■

MARGOT HSU CARROLL is Assistant Vice President, LSU Auxiliary Services. **JEFFREY NICE** is Vice President of Operations, LSU Dining.



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RECOGNIZING WHAT MAKES NACAS STRONG: VOLUNTEERS, DIVERSITY, COMMUNITY, AND COMMITMENT

Matt Marcial, CAE, CMP
NACAS CEO

I hope you had the opportunity to join us in Las Vegas for C3X, because if not you missed a few days of incredible learning opportunities, business connections, and collaboration with over 1,110 industry leaders and nearly 200 of those who were first time participants. There was no shortage of ideas and inspiration stemming from attendees, speakers, and business partners. Now that the dust has settled from C3X, I'd encourage you to reflect on your takeaways from the conference and develop actions for how you'll apply and incorporate your learnings and business connections into the new year. If you or your colleagues couldn't join us this year don't fret, because in February we are bringing you a new virtual program, where you can join us in weekly discussions on some of the most trending topics and sessions from the conference.

A major part of what makes the NACAS community so great is our dedicated volunteers. I want to thank and recognize the outgoing members of our NACAS Board of Directors for their service to the association: Mark Ironside, Emily Messa, CASP, and Andy Meeks, CASP. I would also like to thank NACAS Past President, Matt Portner, CASP for his partnership in leading NACAS over the past year and through my first year

as your CEO. Congratulations to NACAS President, Neil Markley and welcome our incoming board slate: LaNiece Tyree, Jared Ceja, CASP, Esmerelda Valdez, CASP, and Kristy Vienne. Whether at the regional or national level, it's never too late to become a NACAS volunteer, just visit: <https://nacas.org/volunteer-main> for more information.

NACAS has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and we're excited to further strengthening our commitment with the announcement of our new DIAL (Diversity in Auxiliary Leadership Program) that will support emerging leaders from diverse and historically underrepresented backgrounds with leadership and professional development, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Applications for this new cohort-based program will open soon. Visit nacas.org/dial to learn more and register your interest to be a program participant or industry mentor. Also, mark your calendars now for not one but TWO Senior Executive Summits coming in 2023, the first will be held March 12-15 at the Omni Amelia Island Resort. Our second Summit will be focused on advancing Women in Higher Ed Leadership, September 12-15 in Paso Robles, Calif. Both events will feature engaging



speakers and facilitated roundtable discussions on current and future issues impacting auxiliary leaders as well as intimate networking experiences with NACAS business partner executives. This year's Summit in Palm Springs sold-out quickly, so don't delay. Finally, you'll want to save the date for next year's C3X, where we'll be returning to Canada in the amazing city of Toronto, November 5-8, 2023.

As we reflect on the past year and especially during this season of giving, I want to thank this year's NACAS Foundation volunteers and supporters. Congratulations to NACAS Foundation President, J. Rex Tolliver, CASP and welcome to our new incoming Foundation Board members: Emily Messa, CASP, and Joseph Pearson, CASP. The Foundation continues to award grants and scholarships that are directly impacting auxiliary professionals and member institutions within the NACAS community. Your gift will directly support our industry advancement with increased professional development opportunities to deserving professionals in need. Please consider a donation to the NACAS Foundation with your year-end charitable planning.

Thank you for your engagement in NACAS & wishing you a wonderful holiday season! ■



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