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COLLEGE SERVICES

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opening remarks

Presidential Perspective

NACAS Business Partners Work to Promote Higher Education



NEIL MARKLEY
NACAS PRESIDENT

NACAS is an extraordinary organization that connects, educates, and promotes campus commerce for our members, Business Partners, Member Institutions, and ultimately for our students. We have an amazing group of Business Partners that provide so much to our campuses and NACAS itself. While I don't have the space to highlight all of our Business Partners, I'd like to highlight a few that are doing really interesting work, beyond financial, in support of the profession, our students, and NACAS.

In support of furthering our profession, our partners at the Compass Group (Chartwells, Levy, SSC Services, etc.) launched a podcast named "Campus Confidential," hosted by the group's Higher Education Ambassador (and former NACAS CEO) Kelsey Harmon Finn and Workshop Architects' Director for Higher Education (and former university administrator) Loren Rullman. The podcast is diving deep into the real world of higher education leadership and providing a space to connect current and future leaders. Special guests from across higher education are expected to provide insights and reflections, as well. The first podcast dropped the week of February 6 on Spotify. I anticipate this podcast will become an invaluable resource for each of us and the profession of auxiliary services.

In support of the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs, NACAS Business Partner Saxbys is expanding its network of Experiential Learning Platform® (E.L.P.®) cafes nationwide. Saxbys is unique as a campus amenity in that it serves two purposes: Not only is Saxbys a student-centric hospitality concept, but it also serves an institution's need for

paid, on-campus experiential learning opportunities. Designed for and run exclusively by a team of student leaders, this certified B corporation builds unique academic partnerships with colleges and universities of all shapes and sizes that offer fully credited and outcome-driven experiential learning opportunities. Students of all majors develop transferable, industry-agnostic power skills and real, tangible stories of leadership. As a product of a similar program years ago at Sonoma State University, I can attest to the tremendous value and education such an opportunity affords. Experiences like this connect auxiliary services directly to the academic mission of a university: bolstering student belonging; building out student resumes; and offering faculty access to a living, breathing entrepreneurship lab for distinctive case studies and projects.

In support of NACAS, Carty McMullen (Sodexo) and Kara Bunde-Dunn (Slingshot) spend a tremendous amount of time and energy in their work with the NACAS Foundation. Whether it be attending Foundation Board meetings, raising funds, sharing ideas, or matching gifts, these two are always ready to help and lead the way to support many of NACAS' programs and services.

While I truly appreciate the services and financial support provided by all of our Business Partners, I believe relationships run much deeper than partnerships; I encourage you to consider this when working with your Business Partners.

On behalf of the entire NACAS family, best wishes for a happy, healthy 2023, and I look forward to seeing you at one of our many NACAS national and regional events this year. ■

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How Are Auxiliary Services Evolving on Campuses?

CHANGES IN CAMPUS SERVICES ARE CREATING EYE-OPENING OPPORTUNITIES

WITH COLLEGES and universities focusing on educating the next generation of professionals, auxiliary services play a key role in supporting that goal. Over the past several years, administrative leaders have responded to changes in how they deliver various campus services, as well as the evolving needs of their students and community members.

Through deliberate connections and engagements with students, auxiliary services leaders and their departments have shifted their mindset from the transactional to the transformative. New technologies have increased efficiencies so the focus can be more on customer service. Services have been added or expanded to fulfill student interests in events, activities, esports, and food delivery, among several others. As such, many campuses are becoming dynamic, innovative communities.

How these expectations are met depends on the inspiration, creativity, and determination of the auxiliary services community. These departments themselves have undergone changes as the older generations among their ranks retire, and the younger generations rise to fill those vacancies. Some departments are simply unique among their peers, proving that services do not have to be achieved through a rubber-stamp approach.

College Services decided to gauge how auxiliary services leaders were juggling the varied impacts of the great resignation and the COVID-19 pandemic while managing the evolution of campus services. We reached out to a cross-section of NACAS members, ranging from professionals new to the field to individuals with decades of experience, and asked them this question: How are auxiliary services evolving on campus?

Here is what they had to say.



Tranitra Avery

NONPROFIT STEERS THE UNIQUE CAMPUS SERVICE EXPERIENCE

For part of my career, I worked for a state university where auxiliary services were actually part of that institution, but at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), campus services are on the nonprofit side. This is a huge and exciting change for me.

The CSUDH Toro Auxiliary Partners (formerly CSUDH Foundation as of January 2023) is entrusted with creating a unique experience for the students and giving them a sense of security. This is critically important to CSUDH, which is a school that has traditionally served a population of underrepresented groups and first-generation students—among the highest in the CSU system.

Partners in Business

As a nonprofit, the CSUDH Toro Auxiliary Partners provides business services for grant administration, research support, and administrative services through service agreements, which allow the organization to generate revenue to fund educational initiatives. One project we helped fund was the Learning Kitchen, located in our new innovation and instruction building, home of the College of Business Administration & Public Policy. The organization supports commercial services activities inclusive of the usual support services, along with P3 (public-private partnership) projects and campus filming and shows.

Because CSUDH is one of 23 institutions in the CSU system, the organization is able to leverage collaborative buying power. And because we are a nonprofit, we can strategically partner with businesses and organizations that can serve our unique student population.

Evolving to a Traditional Campus

The campus is evolving from a commuter campus to a traditional one. This has created additional innovative business opportunities for us, and this excites me. Thus far, we have transitioned from self-operated dining services to a partnership with Aramark to provide dining services and develop a meal plan program to prepare the campus for the opening of its first dining hall.

In the simplest terms, the CSUDH campus is a unique diamond, and CSUDH Toro Auxiliary Partners is adapting its business structure to support the campus. The students at this institution are well informed and more involved in comparison with my previous institution. This gives me better insight into their needs and expectations for their student experience.

As the first solid leader of the organization in over a decade, I oversee the nonprofit's staff of 26 members, which includes a chief

financial officer and human resources department that supports over 700 employees, mostly grant program support staff.

Having access to NACAS and its network of professionals in the industry has been tremendous for me. I can learn about innovative ideas and figure out how or if that idea could work for CSUDH during its time of growth.

TRANITRA "NITRA" AVERY is executive director of CSUDH Toro Auxiliary Partners, formerly the CSUDH Foundation. She oversees 26 staff members who serve the campus service needs of around 15,000 students. She also was director of auxiliary services at Alabama State University.



Chris Fulkerson

DINING SERVICES ENGAGE STUDENTS; INN BENEFITS SCHOLARSHIPS

Prospective students and parents don't pick a school because of the auxiliaries, but auxiliaries can help to sway them to a school. It starts with a partnership. The expression may be trite, but it's essential. Treat your auxiliary vendors as partners and expect them to treat you the same. Have

them buy into the vision and culture of the institution. Elon University expects them to engage with the campus and to contribute more than their standard product. Innovation is part of Elon's DNA, and it is expected that the auxiliary vendors will use their corporate knowledge and resources to help innovate. From the time a prospective student and their parents look at Elon to the time they graduate, auxiliary services strives to engage with students and offer the white-glove experience throughout their time at Elon.

'Napkin Notes' and Food Pop-ups

Elon Dining listens to what students want and tries to offer outstanding food while engaging students in the dining halls and outside. In the dining halls, there are "Napkin Notes," a way to ask questions, make suggestions, or offer criticism. The dining leadership answers the notes within 48 hours.

Outside of the dining halls and across campus, pop-ups offer a chance for the chefs to try new dishes, let the students try different foods, and offer an opportunity for interaction between the chefs and students. The pop-ups also entice faculty, staff, and commuter students into a dining location. Specialty nights offer a themed night of food throughout the semester. Want lobster and steak? There is a night for that. Caribbean food strike your fancy, or perhaps Peruvian? There are nights for that, too.

Plant-based Dining

Innovation also means being nimble. Try it. If it doesn't work, change it. Elon Dining was receiving requests for a totally plant-based dining location. This past fall, one of the three dining halls went completely plant-based. While it had a loyal but small number of clients, the numbers needed to maintain an entire dining hall were not there. A burger bar was introduced in the facility after fall break with great success, and the dining staff re-imagined the location's dining experience by reintroducing meat options. As an alternative, plant-based stations can be found in each of the three dining halls.

The Inn at Elon

The new boutique hotel was imagined as a five-star experience managed by a contracted vendor. "The Inn at Elon is an exciting new asset on campus and an innovative way to raise revenue for scholarships," said Elon University President Connie Ledoux Book. "Guests at the inn will not only experience a best-in-class stay but simultaneously support Elon's distinctive mission." All revenue beyond operating costs will be directed to fund scholarships. Guests are reminded that their visits to The Inn at Elon are "A Stay With Purpose."

Elon auxiliaries are more than the service providers of the past. They help to differentiate Elon University as a premier institution. Students say they know from the time they set foot on campus that this is where they want to go to school.

CHRIS FULKERSON is assistant vice president for administrative services at Elon University in North Carolina. Since 2014, he has led risk management in insurance and auxiliary services. He held the following positions prior to his current one: chief information officer, director of professional development, director of the library, director of learning resources, and assistant professor of communications. Finishing his 41st year at Elon, he is retiring at the end of the academic year.



Fuller Ming

TECHNOLOGY TOUCHES VARIOUS CAMPUS SERVICES WITH NO END IN SIGHT

The past three years have forced university auxiliary services units to be exceedingly creative, especially with technology. Campus housing, dining services, bookstores, and others all had to quickly utilize technology to align with major pivots in operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following

are technology trends implemented in the past three years that likely would have taken place over a decade under normal conditions:

- **Mobile credentials:** Under the guise of being contactless, several universities put their mobile ID plans on a fast track. There are various technologies being used including Bluetooth low energy, near-field communications (NFC), and QR/2D barcodes that change with each use for added security. Apple and Google use NFC technology that allows a mobile ID in their respective wallets.
- **Meal plans off campus:** Some universities have always allowed their non-meal plan declining balance account to be used off campus. Ohio State, however, has allowed a part of its actual contracted meal plan to also be used with off-campus merchants. According to Zia Ahmed, director of dining services, this decision has been a great success for the program and has not hurt it financially at all.
- **Cashier-less options:** Self-service kiosks are still valuable and can save labor dollars. However, what is being added to your options for cashier-less service is powerful technology such as Amazon's Just Walk Out. Customers scan or tap a card or mobile device as they enter a controlled space, and artificial intelligence-powered technology allows automatic payment for whatever they take off the shelves. The technology was first used in grocery stores and now is being used in stadiums and small convenience store retail locations.
- **Robots:** Kiwibot and Starship small delivery robots are continuing to be deployed by food service departments. At Howard University, through its partnership with Kiwibot, Sodexo deployed these small food delivery robots in fall 2022. In 2019, George Mason University was an early adopter, deploying Starship Technologies' version of this technology.
- **Software as a service (SaaS) cloud deployment:** Many college and university central information technology (IT) units are moving more and more systems off campus. The desire is not just to have a card system or meal plan management system hosted in another data center. The goal is to have a pure SaaS solution where an institution only needs a web browser to use the system. Campus enterprise resource planning systems such as Workday, Oracle, PeopleSoft, and others started this trend several years ago—and it is not slowing down. Howard University and my alma mater, University of Maryland, College Park, are two institutions in the Washington, DC, area deploying such solutions.

These trends are not likely to retreat. Auxiliary services units are looking for ways to increase revenue and deal with the resignation of leaders and employees who take legacy system knowledge with them into retirement or to other jobs. Thus, these and related trends will continue into the foreseeable future.

FULLER MING is senior director for IT with Howard University in Washington, DC, and has worked in higher education technology in student affairs and auxiliary services for over 30 years. The campus card office reports to him, but he also coordinates IT-related projects and initiatives across all auxiliary enterprises at the university. Auxiliary enterprises consist of the campus card office, parking & transportation, dining services, university bookstore, vending machines, on-campus short-term/in-person vending, graphics & printing, and mail services.

SLEEPY CAMPUS TRANSFORMS INTO ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Nestled atop a heavily forested mountain, Simon Fraser University's (SFU's) main campus in Burnaby, British Columbia, a suburb of Vancouver, has long been referred to as a sleepy commuter campus that becomes deserted after the end of the work and school day. SFU's Burnaby campus has often been perceived by students, faculty, and staff as a place to study and work but nothing more. Like most other post-secondary institutions, SFU pivoted to virtual course delivery and work options at the onset of the pandemic, which further cemented SFU's reputation as a sleepy campus devoid of vibrancy. However, in anticipation of students, faculty, and staff returning to campus in fall 2022, ancillary services began eagerly researching, planning, and implementing initiatives that have visibly transformed SFU Burnaby into an animated, vibrant campus that entices students, faculty, and staff to return and stay on campus.



Ayumi Orgar

Vibrant Community

At the center of these initiatives is the community vibrancy planning committee, comprising students and faculty, staff members, and local community members. This diverse committee, chaired by ancillary services' Chief Commercial Services Officer Mark McLaughlin, worked tirelessly to collectively develop the Community Vibrancy Playbook. Guided by principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion; accessibility and welcoming; sustainability and resilience; health and wellness; and indigenization, this living document itemizes and ranks initiatives that welcome, inspire, and animate SFU over a one-to 10-year horizon. In the first year of its rollout, ancillary services activated 30 of its planned initiatives, which include the following:

- **Built environment:** The addition of strategically placed public pianos, Ping-Pong tables, outdoor games, fire pits, pop-up patios, and large tents encourage students, faculty, and staff to gather, learn, and play outside the classroom and office.
- **Natural environment:** The addition of festive lighting on trees highlights the natural beauty of Burnaby Mountain, while adding ambiance and improving safety.
- **Programming activities:** Examples are a street festival that attracted approximately 5,000 people, sustainability efforts such as the upcycling of used chopsticks to create art structures, creative arts classes with public displays, and esports activities.

Given its expertise in managing spaces, the meeting, event and conference services (MECS) department within ancillary services has been instrumental in carrying out such activations. MECS works closely with the facilities department to coordinate space usage so the campus is welcoming, inspiring, and animated.

Looking Forward

Ancillary services continues to envision itself as the driving force behind SFU's transformation into a lively, vibrant campus. Planning for an esports gaming lounge and arena; creating more outdoor learning spaces; installing a host of culturally significant pedestrian crosswalks; repurposing space into board game space; and creating self-guided walking tours of campus art, Indigenous culture, and iconic movie sets are all initiatives that ancillary services is working hard to roll out in the next two years. Through its efforts, ancillary services has positioned itself as a driver of student and campus experience, making an impact on recruitment, retention, and campus life.

AYUMI ORGAR, CPA, CA, is manager of finance for ancillary services at SFU's Burnaby campus in British Columbia, Canada. She has worked at SFU for four years, overseeing the financial operations, analysis, and budgeting for ancillary services.

COVID-19, GREAT RESIGNATION CHANGE UNIVERSITY LANDSCAPE

Like many industries and institutions, campus operations at the University of Richmond continues to see lingering challenges resulting from the pandemic, the great resignation, changing technology, and increased operational costs. These challenges have led to some important opportunities and lessons learned.



Elizabeth St. John

Contactless and Online Transactions

Our operations have undergone dramatic shifts because of the pandemic, and we are still reacting to how the world continues to change. For example, dining services engaged with Grubhub in 2019 to implement an ordering system in our concessions and retail units as a service for our customers. The timing of this implementation was pivotal, as it was already in the works before the COVID-19 pandemic began. In the fall of 2020, given Grubhub's contactless nature, we were able to shift business from the traditional dining hall to our retail units, which assisted in limiting face-to-face interactions and in stretching our staff further.

Contactless and online transactions have altered our relationships with students to be more transactional, which aligns with the ease and pace that students prefer. However, with the successful implementation of Grubhub, which some might say was a "silver lining" of the pandemic, we've seen a decrease in the interpersonal relationships between students and staff that are an important part of excellent service. In 2023, we will continue to focus on enhancing



a sense of community and belonging for our students and creating opportunities for connection.

Boost in Change Management

The great resignation did not spare us. While we knew in 2019 and earlier that the “silver tsunami,” or increase in retirements, was approaching, we did not foresee the perfect storm everyone else experienced.

While this put a strain on an already thin staff, the changes allowed us to reevaluate our talent and ask, “How do we deploy and grow our current staff differently?” We have experienced tremendous internal growth with promotions and transfers, and these shifts provided opportunities for some of our staff members to advance their careers by transitioning into positions with more responsibility. For example, our campus bookstore director shifted into a role that provided more learning opportunities as a collegiate licensing and project manager. While change management means more training, investing in staff has a huge payoff long term.

Change can be painful and scary, but it can also be eye-opening and create new opportunities. We have learned we cannot wait for something to end to get things done because it might not ever end. When approaching change through that lens, we can accept that the new normal is now, and we are not going to let it sink us.

ELIZABETH “LIZ” ST. JOHN, CASP, is collegiate licensing and special project manager at the University of Richmond in Virginia. She manages the university’s collegiate licensing and various projects for its campus services business office. St. John was also director of the SpiderShop, the school’s independent bookstore, for five of her 11 years at the university.

TECHNOLOGY CAN ENHANCE AUXILIARY SERVICES

Can technology drive auxiliary services to eliminate staff positions? Is enhanced technology more cost-effective? Will technology create more business opportunities for auxiliary services? Does technology create more dangers of identity theft?

All of these are very legitimate and serious questions that have been and should be continually addressed and

monitored accordingly. The reduction of staff or the elimination of positions has long been a topic of discussion and debate. I believe enhanced technology does not necessarily mean a reduction of staff, but rather, if done correctly, it can simply help the staff be more productive so they can take on more tasks to enhance the student experience across campus.



Bill Redwine

One-card system

Implementing a one-card system on campus gives students more flexibility to utilize the services offered by a variety of offices. Vending with a one-card system, along with meal plan access and flexible spending accounts, can mean that the student never needs to carry cash on campus. Expanding to off-campus locations gives even more options.

If one-card systems are integrated and online, the cost-effectiveness can be tremendous with staff collecting and generating transaction reports simply by following the business model of tracking through the network. To be as convenient as possible, most vending machines will also accept cash and coins, but the push-to-card swipes will reduce the amount of cash and coins, thus requiring less frequent physical collections and more time for other servicing of the machines. Electronic collections and reconciliation time can be reduced significantly and thus create efficiencies.

Endless Opportunities

New business opportunities for auxiliary services should always be at the forefront of management, and better utilization of technology will increase that tenfold. We've already discussed vending, but the opportunities are endless. Rec center equipment rental through technology-controlled cubicles is being utilized already, and when you add to that the delivery of parcels and other mail, you can quickly see how services can be enhanced. The number of campuses that have jumped onboard with robot delivery of food, bookstore orders, etc., is proving that those little robots are not something out of a sci-fi movie but a reality in everyday life.

All of this technology utilization does mean hackers and scams must be continually monitored for, and the students must be educated and impressed upon to treat their electronic identity as precious as it really is. But then, come to think of it, we all must exercise caution and treat our electronic identity as an invaluable resource. We must be ever so smart and vigilant as to how we share, use, and store that data.

Our own imagination could be the only limitation to how far technology can take us.

BILL REDWINE served as director of auxiliary services at Morehead State University in Kentucky from November 1998 until December 2006, when he was named assistant vice president for auxiliary services. He oversaw and managed the university bookstore, dining services, concessions & vending, laundry service, postal service, the EagleCard Office, document services, environmental health & safety, risk management, and the Eagle Trace Golf Course. Redwine was heavily involved in the implementation of various technology applications on campus until his retirement in 2019. He has served in many positions for NACAS, including vice president of the Association in 2015 and president in 2017. Redwine currently serves on the NACAS Foundation Board of Directors.



Students have always been a driving force in how we evolve and provide services on campus. Since our return to on-campus learning and services in the second half of 2020, our connection with students has been elevated. They have been key contributors to many changes on campus, auxiliary services included. Here are two examples:

- **Fresh food vending:** In response to a reduction in food service hours and locations, a byproduct of declining enrollment and a lower than anticipated housing population, we added more fresh food vending and convenience options—with more on the horizon.
- **Esports:** A dedicated esports arena was added in the student union, with students providing direct feedback and design advice. In the first year, we are updating/upgrading the space—the result of direct and indirect feedback and overall data related to usage patterns and trends.

Campus visitors have also been key in decision-making. These guests include transient visitors, conference and event attendees, and prospective students and their families. Through their experiences and feedback, we have improved several of our services. Examples include:

- **Tech upgrades:** Better access to Wi-Fi services across campus and more user-friendly audiovisual equipment in our event spaces are available.
- **More space:** More access to event spaces in the Oakland Center means no more limitations on when outside guests can reserve space. New spaces previously unavailable are open, including the esports arena added in early 2022.

Faculty and staff are key parts of our campus. Supporting these groups is just as important for the overall success of OU. Examples of how services have or are changing include:

- The planned addition of a faculty lounge connected to one of our existing dining halls; and
- Greater inclusion in more decision-making processes, directly and indirectly, including the relationship and negotiations we hold with our business partners for the bookstore and food services.

We are involved in far more than what is mentioned here. A sign of the leadership auxiliary services has taken at OU is exemplified by the initiatives, committees, and special projects that we are asked to join or, in some cases, lead. A few of these areas include diversity, equity, and inclusion; risk management; emergency preparedness; sustainability; and campus culture. This involvement further exemplifies how auxiliary services are evolving and leading change at OU.

CHRIS REED, CASP, is director of the Oakland Center at OU in Michigan. He manages the operation of the student union (Oakland Center), conferences and events, intern housing, bookstore (contracted service), and food service (contracted service). He also serves as the staff lead for campus sustainability. Reed reports directly to the senior vice president for student affairs and chief diversity officer and sits on the cabinet for the division of student affairs and diversity. ■

CONNECTIONS WITH STUDENTS, VISITORS, FACULTY INSPIRE INNOVATIONS

“You don’t build it for yourself. You know what the people want, and you build it for them.” This is a quote from Walt Disney, and it hangs on my office wall. It is a reminder of what it means to be a servant leader and represents how I approach everything I do at Oakland University (OU). When I was asked the question of how auxiliary services are evolving on our campus, I immediately thought of this concept.

A lot has changed at OU in a short period. Some of these changes include new people in leadership positions, challenges with enrollment and retention, and new campus programs and initiatives. These, among others, have all played a role in how services have changed and/or adapted to better serve our entire community.



Chris Reed



An individual demonstrates where and how the University of Houston's digital Cougar Card is scanned at the entry gate of one of the university's six parking garages.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Virtual Permit Program Revamps Parking Experience

TECHNOLOGY REPLACES THOUSANDS OF HANGTAGS FOR A MORE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE AT UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

BY RICHARD ZAGRZECKI

IN 2019, the University of Houston (UH) set a goal to go completely virtual with its parking permit program. At an urban university with 47,000 students, more than 10,000 faculty and staff, six parking garages, and dozens of parking lots at four campus locations in Texas, this was not going to be an easy task.

The parking and transportation team at UH worked tirelessly on researching, studying, and developing an all-encompassing plan to roll out the new program in the 2022 fall semester. Despite some unforeseen obstacles along the way—including the COVID-19 pandemic—UH made the transition, which will reduce the university's carbon footprint in many ways, including through the elimination of thousands of plastic hangtag permits every year.

Over the past several years, parking and transportation services has been active in incorporating the latest technology into the services it provides the UH community. Switching to virtual parking permits, however, was the most comprehensive change it has undertaken.

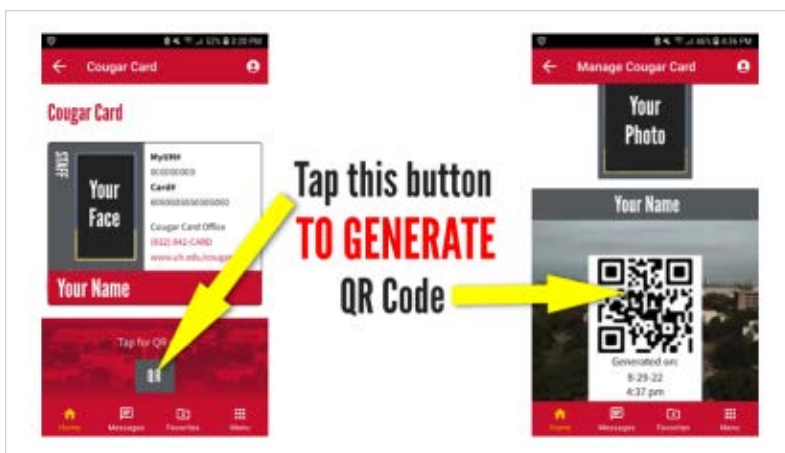
Students and faculty and staff members who purchase a parking permit no longer need to display a plastic hangtag. Instead, they only need to enter the vehicle information correctly in their parking account and make sure the vehicle they park on campus is selected as the "active" vehicle on their permit. If they bring a different car to campus on a given day, they just need to go into their parking account through their smartphone or other device to switch out the vehicle. The process takes only a

TECH UPGRADES AIM TO BOOST CUSTOMER SERVICE

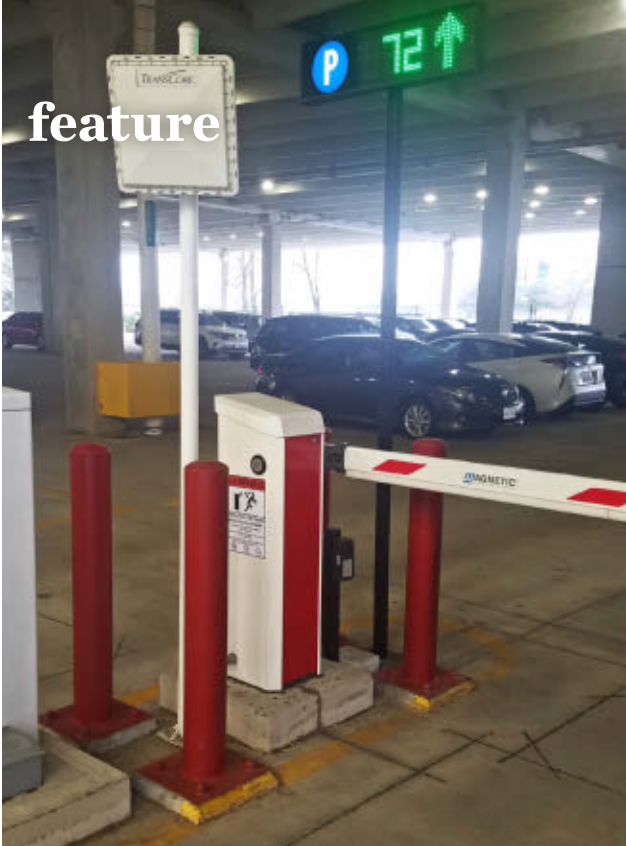
University of Houston (UH) parking and transportation services has been proactive in incorporating the latest technology when upgrading its services. Neil Hart, assistant vice president of parking and transportation services, said staying on top of the latest technological advancements in the parking field is key to providing good customer service, especially with the younger generation. Several upgrades are included below:

- Parking guidance systems were installed in all six on-campus parking garages four years ago. Customers now can find an open space faster and more efficiently. The systems provide the department improved usage data, track the number of vehicles in the garage in real time, and use signs and colored lights to direct customers to available spaces.
- All but a handful of physical parking meters were removed from campus and replaced with a virtual text-to-pay visitor parking system over the past year. Rather than getting out of their vehicle and paying at a meter, customers now can sit in their vehicle and pay with a credit card using their smartphone. Signage at each location explains how to complete the transaction. UH still offers the ability to pay at a payment machine with a credit card in its parking garages' visitor sections. The transition went more smoothly than expected, with few complaints received.
- GPS on shuttle buses allows customers to see where the buses are in real time on the university's app and get an approximate wait time for the next bus to arrive.
- Customers can sign up for text alerts, which parking and transportation services pushes out when needed.
- Customers can get in a virtual queue line at the parking and transportation services customer service office, with text messages providing updates on where they are in the line and when they should come to the office.

"Change is a part of all aspects of life and business. By keeping up with the latest advances, it keeps you from having to play catch-up later on down the road, which may end up costing more in the long run," Hart says.



This graphic shows how to pull up a QR code through the University of Houston's digital Cougar Card to scan at the entry gate of the university's parking garages.



A device at the entry gate of one of the University of Houston's campus parking garages reads toll tags on vehicles.



The QR code in the screenshot at left is part of the University of Houston's digital Cougar Card used in the university's parking garages. The University of Houston's digital Cougar Card is shown in the screenshot on the right.

“ONE OF THE LESSONS WE LEARNED FROM INCORPORATING THE TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH VIRTUAL PERMITS IS TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED. NO MATTER HOW WELL YOU THINK YOU HAVE A HANDLE ON THINGS, SOMETHING YOU WERE NOT EXPECTING WILL ARISE.”

—NEIL HART, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, UH PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

minute or two to complete. License plate reader technology installed on enforcement vehicles quickly identifies if a vehicle has a parking permit associated with it and if it is parked in the correct campus location.

LEARNING CURVE AND ROADBLOCKS

Despite a marketing campaign that included several virtual information sessions, numerous email messages with instructions, and regular social media postings, customers experienced a learning curve during the first two weeks of the semester. Much of that involved those who have a permit to park in a garage. Garage permit holders previously had to swipe their parking permit at the gate for entry. They also had the option of registering the toll tag on their vehicle for easy, hands-free entry. With virtual permits, those who do not have a toll tag had to adjust to using one of two new entry methods:

1. They could either swipe their campus ID card, known as the Cougar Card, or
2. They could pull up a digital version of the Cougar Card through the university's app and scan the QR code generated through the digital card.

In addition, the changes uncovered some unforeseen roadblocks not identified during the many months of testing. During the first week, some lines formed at the entry gates to parking garages and gated lots. Some of this resulted from people not knowing the new methods for entry. Some were a result of problems associated with a small subset of the university ID cards.

“One of the lessons we learned from incorporating the technological changes associated with virtual permits is to expect the unexpected,” says Neil Hart, MBA, CAPP, CASP, assistant vice president of parking and transportation services. “No matter how well you think you have a handle on things, something you were not expecting will arise.”

The change to virtual permits did solve one problem. In previous years, customers who purchased their permits online had to wait for them to arrive in the mail. Sometimes, the permits did not get delivered in time for the first day of classes. Other times, they were lost in the mail and never arrived. This would lead to long lines at the parking and transportation services customer service office the first week of the semester.

This semester, though, those long lines never materialized. “By going virtual, it also guarantees the permit will never be lost or stolen, so customers no longer have to worry about getting a replacement,” Hart says. ■

RICHARD ZAGRZECKI is department outreach manager for UH parking and transportation services. He can be reached at rzagrzecki@uh.edu.

member spotlight: Ana Alvarez



Ana Alvarez, CPA, CASP, assistant vice president of auxiliary services, University of Miami

NACAS members are leaders who help create hospitable, well-rounded campus communities worldwide through the various campus services they ensure are provided. In this new feature, *College Services* is hosting a question-and-answer segment in which members are introduced. For this issue, NACAS interviewed Ana Alvarez, CPA, CASP, assistant vice president of auxiliary services at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, FL.

College Services: Please introduce yourself and tell us about your role in auxiliary services.

Ana Alvarez: My name is Ana Alvarez, and I am currently the assistant vice president for auxiliary services at the University of Miami (UM). In my role, I have oversight of the contractual relationship with business partners that manage and operate services for the university to include food service (resident, retail, catering, and basketball concessions), vending and pouring rights, logo licensing, campus store, mail operations, managed print services, travel management, and cable/streaming services.

I joined the university in April of 2002 and remained at UM through 2012 before I moved to North Carolina and served as director of auxiliary

services at UNC (University of North Carolina) Charlotte through August 2017. Family brought me back to UM, and I've been here now over five years—the second time around.

Miami is my hometown; however, my husband was in the Army early in our marriage, so I lived in Alaska and Alabama. I attended Troy State University where I graduated with my B.S.B.A. (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) in accounting, Florida International University for graduate school, and practiced as a certified public accountant in the public sector before transitioning to higher education.

CS: What do you get out of being a NACAS member?

AA: NACAS was instrumental in the early years of my career. It allowed me to learn more about our industry from other leaders with greater knowledge and experience. Those interactions at regional and national conferences, in addition to the institutes, encouraged me to connect with colleagues, to share stories and resources and build relationships, many of which have continued throughout my 20-year career in auxiliary operations. NACAS serves as a catalyst for driving enhancements to our campus services and connecting campus leaders with the business partners who are key to the success of our campus communities.

CS: What NACAS member did you meet that made an impact on your role and/or your department?

AA: There are a few that come to mind. Early on, I met Doug Ross from University of Georgia where we were a part of the First Fifty—Institute for Managers. He was able to share and offer guidance early in my career when I was not too sure about how best to bring value to my role and how to better understand the role auxiliaries play in the student experience.

Lynne Williams of University of Arkansas was also one of the first people I met, and we instantly connected and have always leaned on each other, from sharing basic thoughts and ideas to discussing more complex strategies.

Robert Holden and I connected due to shared interest; he's from Alaska, and I briefly lived in Alaska while my husband served in the Army. Throughout the years, Robert and I have shared lots of conversations and experiences that have been very valuable.

Lastly, my former supervisor and mentor at UNC Charlotte, Keith Wassum. I credit Keith for much

of my professional and personal development; he allowed me to really take on the auxiliary portfolio with a very different approach. Transitioning from a private institution to a state school with much larger enrollment and a different business model challenged me to think more strategically. Keith really valued his business partner and staff relationships and was very thoughtful in his approach to building a better campus for the future, not just for the moment.

CS: What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

AA: Perhaps my greatest accomplishment was my contribution to the design and opening of South Village Dining Hall at UNC Charlotte. I had not been challenged in my career at that point until the opportunity presented itself to learn from one of my mentors, Keith Wassum. Working collaboratively with a very talented team at UNC Charlotte and Chartwells, [we] opened the 56,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art dining hall. This experience is instrumental in the facilities design and construction aspects of the work we do as auxiliary operators. Most recently, I'm working at Miami on the design of our new 44,000-square-foot dining hall to include an athletic training table. I'm hopeful this new facility will serve as a campus showcase to our already beautiful campus, complementing our new Centennial Village housing complex opening fall 2024.

CS: What show have you recently binged that you would recommend?

AA: Netflix, Hulu, Prime, Disney, and Peacock—I subscribe to them all. This past year, my daughter suggested "Stranger Things," and I must admit it was strange, but the fact that it takes place in the '80s really got me hooked and reminiscing! I also enjoy documentaries; "Harry & Meghan" is what I'll be binging next. The royals are fascinating! ■

If you would like to contact Alvarez, she can be reached at aalvarez@miami.edu.

business partner spotlight: Anne-Marie Desaulniers



Anne-Marie Desaulniers, key account manager, Zippin

Business Partners offer unique campus service solutions that meet the needs of NACAS' higher education members and their school communities. In this new feature, *College Services* is hosting a question-and-answer segment in which our Business Partners are introduced. For this issue, NACAS interviewed Anne-Marie Desaulniers, key account manager at Zippin.

College Services: Please introduce yourself and tell us about your role in auxiliary services.

Anne-Marie Desaulniers: My name is Anne-Marie Desaulniers, and I am a key account manager at Zippin, leading our higher education strategy. If you think about checkout-free experiences, campuses are a very natural fit for our technologies. I've been spending a lot of time meeting with schools in the United States and Canada that have seen the value of checkout-free experiences and leveraging our experience in sports venues and airports to have conversations about how we can help their campuses.

What I specifically do is help connect the dots between finding the best locations and helping integrate technology on campus. Ultimately, Zippin's mission is to focus on two problems that come up often in higher education: helping alleviate the labor shortage and serving a really demanding customer base at all hours. These students are fast, they're everywhere, they're up early and out late, and we need to tailor services to ensure their needs are met!

CS: What do you get out of being a NACAS Business Partner?

AMD: I stayed for two days at C3X 2022, and my "aha" moment was realizing that the NACAS community is a group of leaders and innovators trying to improve their campuses. At Zippin, we're really focusing on streamlining the shopping experience, and the people I spoke to in Vegas are looking to do the same thing. It was incredible to see that the need is prevalent and the individuals attending are looking to make their campuses better through this opportunity and so much more.

CS: What NACAS member did you meet that made an impact on your role and/or your department?

AMD: I couldn't pinpoint one specific person because there were so many conversations with campus executives who helped me understand how much need there really is in the market. In the quick service business, I spoke to operators about how students don't want to wait in line and have minimal patience

for most wait times. This was helpful for me, because NACAS members are on the ground with their students and institutions daily, addressing needs and identifying new ones before they become problems. Making those connections supported our focus on expanding our technology within higher education. A lot of strategies implemented five years ago are irrelevant today, and I heard so much about how cutting-edge many of these campuses have been forced to be. It was incredibly impactful to know how fast the industry is willing to change to serve its students.

CS: What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

AMD: I've had a few and sure hope to have more! What comes to mind the quickest is based on the shift between where I've been and where I am now. My background is in CPG (consumer packaged goods), working for one of the largest multinational food and beverage companies. I've worked with thin margins and incremental improvements, but now I've swapped to an industry that is making a much bigger and broader impact.

We help the industry grow and be successful and make significant improvements in the way that students live and shop on campus. I'm genuinely proud of being able to look at an industry and identify how we can work together to make shopping environments frictionless and fast. It's a win-win of happy students and happy retailers with Zippin, and bringing that to colleges and universities as quickly as we're able to do is inspiring. Being able to see that impact on retailers' bottom lines and shoppers' faces is a unique position and propels our mission to see more checkout-free options in more places.

CS: What show have you recently binged that you would recommend?

AMD: I enjoy my Netflix and binge-watched "The Playlist," the show about Spotify. It's very cool. Over the course of eight episodes or so, it tells the story of how Spotify came about across different perspectives. You'll hear from the developer, the competitor, the marketing, and how everyone was after the same mission of making Spotify but the different motivations behind it. I would say ... be ready, because you don't come out with a true answer on how Spotify truly was formed, but it's a really cool show! ■

If you would like to contact Desaulniers, she can be reached at anne@getzippin.com.

Creating Food Security and Food Equity on Campus

A GUIDE TO THE RETAIL SMART FRIDGE MARKET

BY NATHAN DOWNS

Unattended fresh food retail is seeing significant adoption on university campuses to eliminate food insecurity and achieve food equity. This adoption is driven equally by the value provided to the campus community and the ROI for the fresh food company. Unlike honor-system based Micro Markets, smart fridges are secure, 24/7 solutions with small footprints and restaurant-quality food.

After 7 p.m., most campus food retail locations are closed or not located where students need them most. For these reasons, dormitories, student unions, and libraries are common locations to combat food insecurity with all-hours fresh food access via campus card-integrated smart fridges.

Food equity encompasses the adverse effects of fresh food distribution that marginalized communities face. Most campus pantries have limited hours that are focused on reducing these impacts. Through campus card subsidies, smart fridges deliver nourishment and choice, with dignity, around the clock. In this way, all students have equitable access to quality nutrition that has a well-known statistical correlation to achieving a higher GPA.

Smart fridges eliminate the challenges of centralized food distribution by empowering every campus food producer to independently stock any fridge.

Armed with a roll of smart stickers and a smartphone, the catering event surplus or expiring cafe product can be tagged and immediately made

available for sale. At a glance, the campus operator can view all expirations across smart fridges via dashboard to ensure products are safe and sellable around the clock in the final 30 hours of shelf life. Full accessibility during this critical window of shelf life minimizes waste while fueling food equity, food security, and off-hours revenue on campus.

Students are empowered to check real-time inventories at fridges across campus via a smartphone app.

Our white paper titled “A Comparison of Fresh Food Vending Platforms in 2023” provides an overview of smart fridge technologies, a guide to the due diligence process, and insight on operations principles that are distinctly different from best



These vending machines are from smart fridge manufacturers in the U.S. market.

Due Diligence – Retail Smart Fridges

☐ Consumer Experience

☐ Launch Success

☐ Operational Success

☐ Merchandising

☐ Food Safety

☐ RFID Stickers

☐ Payments

☐ Revenue

☐ User Experience

☐ Operator Experience

☐ Data Security

☐ Product Roadmap

practices in traditional vending and food service operations. The paper incorporates insight from a dozen food service veterans with cumulative experience deploying eight smart vending platforms in hundreds of locations across the United States.

In our experience, due diligence discussions around campus card integrations, data security, and food safety tend to be more cut and dry. Due to their qualitative nature, the partner either meets these criteria, or they don't. On the other hand, addressing topics like vanity technology, unattended merchandising, software product road map, and consumer experience require thoughtful discussions

for a tailored approach. When selecting the right smart fridge platform for your organization, it is critical to understand the resources and support that is provided to your team throughout the product lifetime. Manufacturers should be able to share training resources as well as case studies, references, and testimonials from credible organizations within your industry.

Monthly software fees are an investment in the current service and funding future software updates. If relevant to your operations, these updates can add significantly to your bottom line over time. Features such as automated par sheets,

campus card integrations, and trend mapping are a few proven examples. Most often, the leadership team's background and their sales focus will tell you which customer segment will benefit most from future software updates. A smart fridge company should be able to share insights on their software product road map.

Unattended fresh food retail is a brand-new segment of American retail.

Selling a \$12 sushi roll out of a vending machine creates new consumer concerns and requires new best practices for retailers. Optimizing smart fridge sales with restaurant quality foods requires familiarity with these new consumer behaviors and merchandising principles.

Launching a smart fridge successfully takes thoughtful planning and execution. Selecting the right location, footprint, and product mix is paramount. We recommend that smart fridge operators treat launches more like a mini restaurant launch and less like a plug-and-play vending machine. This attention to detail, combined with responsive reiteration, translates to a much higher caliber amenity for the community and a much higher ROI for the operator. Operators that approach launching smart fridges with only vending or food service sensibilities often have blind spots that can cost them tens of thousands of dollars in lost revenue in their first year alone.

Smart fridges can play a key role in creating a paradigm shift on campuses for food security, food equity and minimizing food waste. Like any meaningful shift, this requires thoughtful planning, time, and great partners that are committed to fulfilling the vision. Our white paper and due diligence checklist will simplify the process for making an informed decision when selecting the smart fridge manufacturer that is best suited for your campus. ■



NATHAN DOWNS is CEO and co-founder of FoodSpot, which manufactures smart, fresh food vending machines. Early in his career, he was the executive chef to Chancellor Robert

Birgeneau at University of California, Berkeley. He has spent the past 15 years working in venture capital-funded food tech companies in Silicon Valley focusing on fresh food accessibility. For more information, visit www.LaunchFoodSpot.com.



NACAS IS LEVERAGING ITS VALUES TO STRENGTHEN MEMBER SERVICES



MATT MARCIAL, CAE, CMP | NACAS CEO

The year 2023 is well underway, and the excitement of a new year is upon us. This is the perfect time to take a step back and not only reflect on where we've been but where we are headed. As we are entering the second year of our three-year strategic plan, I'd like to share some updates and insights on where the Association is going. Not unlike many of your campus operations, NACAS has been impacted by the great resignation, and we have experienced staff departures for various reasons. With this challenge is the opportunity for NACAS to leverage and articulate our Association's strengths and values to attract and retain talent to execute our strategies. NACAS is a community of passionate leaders within higher education who are making a difference daily to impact student success and the on-campus experience. Our organization's values—integrity, leadership, adaptability, excellence, inclusiveness, respect, and community—are our core differentiators and are reflected in the actions of our stakeholders.

Volunteerism is central to NACAS' success and member engagement. We are at a pivotal point to harness our volunteer engagement opportunities and maximize your volunteer experience. Time is one of the most valuable resources for all of us today, and when agreeing to share your time and talents, it's important for us to make this time rewarding for you. NACAS offers year-round volunteer opportunities with a wide range of time commitments and opportunities to serve locally in your region or at the national level. Simply visit nacas.org/volunteer-main to learn more.

NACAS offers several member services and resources, but we're redefining the value proposition of our educational offerings and product portfolio. We're also known for our C3X Annual Conference &

Expo where high-quality education sessions and networking opportunities will continue to be delivered, but we aren't stopping there. NACAS has made investments in content development and a learning management system to support the ongoing professional development needs of our members. These new certificate programs will be rooted in the competency-based needs for the major auxiliary operations and serve as a pathway to career growth and supporting the CASP (certified auxiliary services professional) certification.

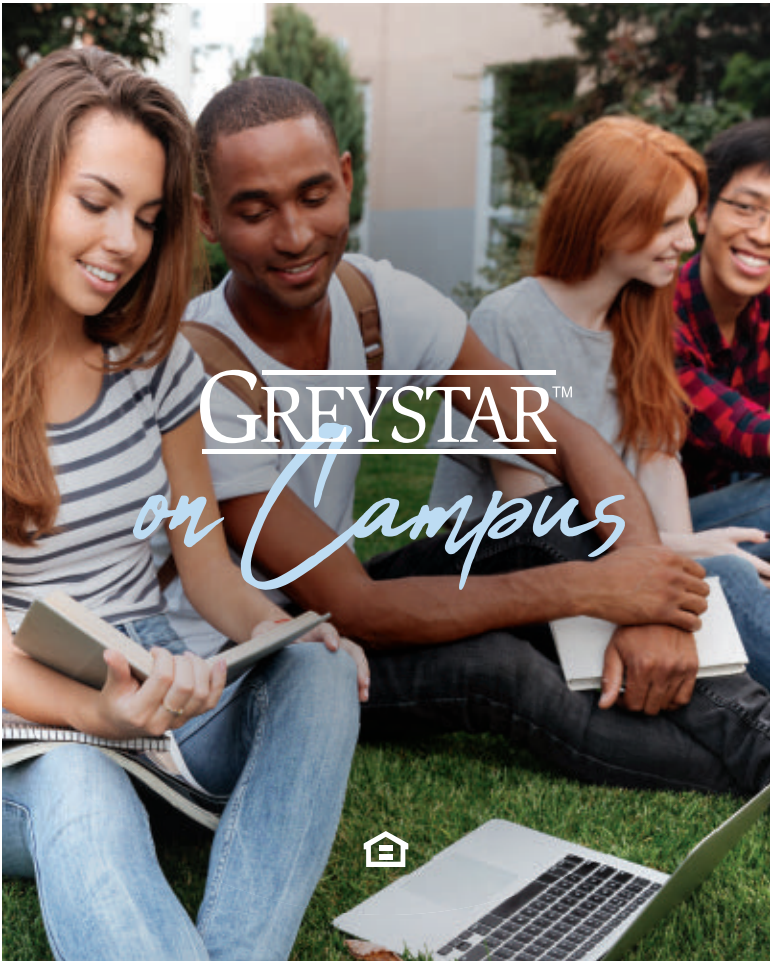
As we've all experienced, technology is ever-changing, and to support many of these new initiatives, we are doing a thorough review and overhaul of our legacy systems, processes, and technology to improve your member experience. These changes won't happen overnight and will be an ongoing process as we roll out new enhancements and improvements. Finally, we are also modernizing our sales, marketing, and communication tactics for the digital, post-coronavirus environment we are living in today. As an Association, NACAS serves a wide range of institution types—all with unique needs and operational challenges—and because of this, it's important we are focused on ensuring you receive the communications most relevant to you and your institution.

The strength of NACAS is in our community. Thank you for being what makes NACAS great and joining us on this journey! ■

TECHNOLOGY IS EVER-CHANGING, AND TO SUPPORT MANY OF THESE NEW INITIATIVES, WE ARE DOING A THOROUGH REVIEW AND OVERHAUL OF OUR LEGACY SYSTEMS, PROCESSES, AND TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE YOUR MEMBER EXPERIENCE.

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