

**Stanford University Elevates
Stadium Dining**

Chefs create a destination for guests with their innovative and creative menus

**Reusable Products Can Redefine
Campus Dining Culture**

These bowls and cups are an emerging contributor to the sustainability market

SUMMER 2024

college services

**SUSTAINABLE
TRANSIT:
SHIFT TO ELECTRIC
BUSES DRIVES
UNIVERSITY INTO
GREEN FUTURE**

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opening remarks

Presidential Perspective

A New Day



BRETT JACKSON, CPA, CASP
NACAS PRESIDENT

As many of us experienced on our own campuses, the COVID-19 pandemic created a whole new level of changes for us, and NACAS also felt those winds of change. The good news is a new day has come for our campuses and for NACAS.

In February 2024, NACAS welcomed a familiar face as its newest CEO when Rich Steele joined the team. Rich spent 37 years in higher education and 30 years in auxiliary services. He was an active member of NACAS during his time in auxiliary services and even served as president of NACAS South.

With Rich at the helm and a solid team behind him, we are poised to move this organization forward, but we can't do that without all of you: our members, Business Partners, volunteers, and board members. Whatever your role, you, too, can help as we forge ahead.

In his first 100 days, Rich had been focused on engaging with various individuals and groups to learn more about the state of our organization and opportunities to better support our membership. You each have valuable input, and I know Rich would welcome the opportunity to speak with you. So, please reach out and share your thoughts and ideas so we can be part of making NACAS the best association possible.

In addition to listening and learning, Rich is reviewing roles and responsibilities to ensure alignment with the needs of the organization. Already under Rich's leadership, the team is developing robust action plans to achieve our strategic priorities and creating a financial strategy to ensure reserves are not only maintained but grow. The team is also establishing standard operating procedures and planning calendars and is ensuring transparency and communication between various volunteer groups and committees.

IN HIS FIRST 100 DAYS, RICH HAD BEEN FOCUSED ON ENGAGING WITH VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STATE OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER SUPPORT OUR MEMBERSHIP.

I am so encouraged by the progress I have seen, and I can't wait to see the new heights NACAS can achieve under the leadership of our new CEO.

"These are exciting times filled with an abundance of energy and potential for NACAS. We want NACAS to meet the needs of auxiliary professionals and to become a great source of pride for all of our members," Rich adds.

Please feel free to reach out to Rich or me with any feedback you may have.

A new day has come for NACAS, and it's up to us to make the best of it! Join us by providing feedback, volunteering, and participating in all that NACAS has to offer. ■

cover feature



One of the first electric buses the University of Georgia purchased stops at Tate Plaza across from Sanford Stadium in Athens, GA.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW DAVIS TUCKER | UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



Powering Progress From Diesel to Electric

UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA IS DRIVING
SUSTAINABILITY
WITH GROWING
ELECTRIC BUS FLEET

BY MICHAEL PANNELL

cover feature

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA (UGA) is not just revving its engines—it's electrifying its motors.

In 2016, UGA's Transportation and Parking Services (TPS) started a strategic journey to improve the overall sustainability and financial outlook of campus transit. The year 2019 was pivotal, with the introduction of 20 fully electric buses. By 2021, the number of electric buses grew to 33, making UGA the host of the largest known electric fleet in U.S. higher education.

This initiative, bolstered by federal and state grants, not only places UGA at the forefront of this technology, but it also shows the university's commitment to sustainability while improving the program's financial future.

GETTING THE BUSES TO CAMPUS

A mixture of funding made building the fleet of electric buses possible. The initial grant of \$10 million came in 2016 from the Georgia State Road and Tollway Authority's GO! Transit Capital Program, and \$7.5 million came from UGA Auxiliary Services.

The state grant, secured in partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation, enhanced UGA's commitment to operational sustainability and efficiency in campus transit. This marked the first significant step toward electrifying a large portion of the university's transportation fleet and laid the groundwork for subsequent expansions. The growth of its electric bus fleet has lessened noise pollution, reduced the university's environmental impact, and offered modern transportation options.

After receiving the grant, UGA evaluated and tested electric bus technology so students, faculty, staff, and visitors would receive the best option possible. The features tested included bus capacity, handling, turning, hill climbing, battery range, rider and driver experiences, acceleration, braking, maintenance, and durability.

The state of Georgia conducted similar testing and selected Proterra as a vendor for electric buses, enabling UGA to procure its new buses under a statewide contract. In 2019, UGA purchased 20 Proterra electric buses, marking the beginning of this journey.

Building on this progress, TPS continued to expand its bus fleet using additional funding received in 2019 from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program. The allotment of \$7.46 million, with a 30% match from UGA, enabled the acquisition of 13 more electric buses, bringing that portion of the fleet to 33. FTA also provided the third and most recent grant in 2023. At \$7.2 million, the funding will enable TPS to acquire up to eight more all-electric buses.

WHY UGA DID IT

The transition to electric buses brought multiple benefits. The move was primarily motivated by the financial benefits electric buses offer. Generally speaking, public transit is not a profitable endeavor. The shift to electric buses eliminated the need for TPS to fund and purchase new buses every year; previously, it had replaced four buses annually.

With a fleet consisting of 33 electric buses, 35 diesel buses, and two gasoline buses, TPS emphasizes the importance of diversifying its transportation options. While the movement from a mostly diesel

FAST FACTS

- Each electric bus costs less than \$25 a day in energy expenses compared with \$200 a day for diesel buses.
- Each electric bus reduces net greenhouse gas emissions by 70% compared with diesel buses.
- Each electric bus can travel 1,100 miles on a single charge, a record Proterra Catalyst E2 holds with acceleration and torque.
- Since their introduction, UGA's electric buses have avoided over 2,700 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

environment has helped keep student fees low and reduce maintenance costs for a longer-lasting fleet, TPS recognizes the necessity of maintaining a balanced approach. A diverse fleet ensures resilience in the face of unforeseen circumstances; in the event of an electrical outage, diesel buses are a reliable backup option.

Energy costs for operating the electric buses amount to less than \$25 a day per bus, significantly lower than the approximately \$200 a day per bus for their diesel counterparts. The reduced maintenance costs associated with electric buses, along with lower electricity expenses compared with traditional fuel costs, make a compelling case for this transition.

"Transitioning to electric buses purchased through grant funding fueled the opportunity to improve our financial outlook," says Brett Jackson, CPA, CASP, associate vice president for UGA's Auxiliary Services and NACAS president. "With these grants, we no longer shoulder the entire purchase cost of new buses. Along with decreased operating and maintenance costs, we have significantly improved our overall fund balance."

The expansion of its electric bus fleet will continue to help UGA make strides toward a more sustainable future. The new corrosion-resistant buses produce zero tailpipe emissions, contributing to improved air quality on campus and reduced greenhouse gases. Net greenhouse gas emissions are a 70% decrease compared with the diesel buses. With the elimination of tailpipe emissions, surrounding cyclists, pedestrians, and other travelers also enjoy a cleaner commute.

"These electric buses represent a substantial step forward in UGA's ongoing pursuit of sustainability," says TPS Director Todd Berven. "They have not only enabled us to reduce our carbon footprint but have also enhanced the overall quality of transportation services we provide to our students, faculty, staff, and visitors."

One of UGA's Auxiliary Services' core values is a student-centric approach. The students' feedback provides valuable insight into what is accomplished at the university.

One student noted a recurring theme: "I like how they are a cleaner alternative to regular buses, but I don't notice any difference in quality."

While the absence of significant differences may not draw attention from students, it underscores the effectiveness of electric buses as a viable and comparable alternative to traditional diesel models.



A University of Georgia electric bus waits for commuters at Sanford Stadium on the campus in Athens, GA.

The electric buses also have provided learning opportunities for students, particularly in the College of Engineering. The students developed a plan with TPS in which electric buses could support essential functions, including heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning operations in residential housing, ensuring campus safety in extreme circumstances. Additionally, several students' capstone projects have focused on the university's electric bus fleet.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Bringing electric buses to UGA was a groundbreaking move. Bryan Fuller, interim maintenance assistant manager at TPS with 28 years of experience in campus transit at the university, expressed his appreciation for the electric buses.

"This puts us at the forefront of electric bus technology. I'm happy we're doing this," Fuller says.

However, the move did come with a set of challenges. The integration of the electric buses required a concerted effort to train mechanics and the maintenance team in how to use the new technology that comes with electric buses.

While he was enthusiastic about the new buses, Fuller emphasized the importance of this specialized training and learning more about

how electric buses work. It was a thorough process, including a four-day course in 2019 that focused on troubleshooting and lockout/tagout procedures. The maintenance team also visited the plant in Greenville, SC, to tour Proterra.

Explaining the differences between electric and diesel buses, Fuller noted that while the electric buses have two transmissions and two motors that make them move, the overall maintenance process is similar to that of diesel buses. However, he acknowledged that his team encountered challenges with the chargers for the electric buses such as instances where only some of the 12 chargers were operational simultaneously.

Fuller pointed out the dependence on an outside vendor to handle charger issues because some of the information is proprietary and needs to be handled by a field representative.

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION

Concerns surrounding battery range also emerged as a prominent issue during the vetting process. Ensuring sufficient battery capacity to meet operational needs was key. To address this concern, UGA engaged in rigorous testing and evaluation, inviting different vendors to showcase their electric bus models for real-world simulations on campus.

cover feature



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Hairy Dawg, the costumed mascot of the University of Georgia (UGA) Bulldogs, stands at the entrance of one UGA's electric buses at Tate Plaza across from Sanford Stadium in Athens, GA.

This proactive approach enabled UGA to assess the performance, reliability, and range of various electric buses, ultimately leading to the vendor that best aligned with the university's vision.

Beyond technical complexities, the transition to electric buses also posed significant financial hurdles. Each bus carried a price tag of approximately \$850,000, presenting a formidable upfront cost. To overcome this obstacle, UGA leveraged grants to offset the initial investment, ensuring the transition remained financially viable.

Securing grants such as those administered by FTA and state-level programs proved instrumental in facilitating the transition to electric buses, emphasizing the importance of proactive grant-seeking strategies for institutions considering a similar transition.

FINAL THOUGHTS

For institutions considering the introduction of electric buses, several key factors are needed for success. UGA was prepared from an infrastructure and maintenance position, federal funds for the purchase of buses were secured, and staff members supported the idea of a

sustainable future. If any of this preparation had been lacking, the introduction of electric buses would not have been as successful.

While there are some learning curves to new operation methods, the overall reception has been overwhelmingly positive.

"We saw the introduction of electric buses as a win-win to improve financial stewardship and to positively address the perception of public transportation, with more sustainable buses that have zero emissions," says Jackson.

With the recent acquisition of additional funding and grants, TPS is poised to continue expanding the university's bus fleet and potentially innovating in new arenas. UGA's Auxiliary Services remains committed to exploring new opportunities and striving for excellence—and it's just getting started. ■



MICHAEL PANELL is a marketing specialist at UGA and a writer for *UGA Today*, the official newspaper for the university.



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LEVELING UP

the Stadium Dining Experience

AT STANFORD, CHAMPAGNE, CARVING STATIONS, AND ALL-STAR SERVICE PUT DIRECTOR'S LEVEL SUITE CONCESSIONS IN A DIFFERENT LEAGUE

BY KELLY KILLIAN

AMONG COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, Stanford University has long been recognized for its excellence.

As the Stanford Cardinal football team competes in the NCAA's Atlantic Coast Conference, it brings with it a level of performance that extends beyond the field—to the culinary arena, where Stanford's VIP stadium dining experience is reaching unprecedented heights.

During home games at Stanford Stadium on the California campus, spectators in the director's level suites are treated to premium concessions. The program is designed to be a destination for guests to cheer on the home team while enjoying delicious and inventive menus as well as a showcase for the exceptional creativity and talents of the chefs of Stanford Dining, Hospitality & Auxiliaries (SDHA), a division of Residential & Dining Enterprises (R&DE).

Revenue generated by the program goes to help offset student room and board rate increases.

WINNING GAME PLAN

Stanford's reimagined stadium suite catering program kicked off in fall 2023. In preparation for its rollout, the culinary team visited a number of professional sports venues with top-ranked food and beverage programs and researched cutting-edge restaurant industry trends. "It's part of SDHA's culture to consistently be critically evaluating what we do and looking for opportunities to take our services to the next level," says Eric Montell, assistant vice provost of SDHA.

"It also happens to be good business. In the highly competitive marketplace that catering is, showcasing our team's unique talents and strengths is not just advantageous, it's essential," he adds.

Stanford Catering isn't the exclusive provider for university events campuswide; university leaders are free to decide who fulfills their catering needs.

"It's important that our offering stands above the rest as the best-in-class provider. So, when we have the opportunity to put our best food forward and deliver an outstanding experience for many of the senior leaders—as the director's level dining program affords—we take full advantage of it," Montell says.

SAVORING THE RIVALRY

Prior to the season, culinary leaders across SDHA met to map out the themes and menus for each home game. In addition to the director's level, Stanford Catering provides food service to the individual suites and the stadium roof deck, and each game's theme is woven into every layer of the VIP hospitality experience.

These menus always include a custom Hot Dog of the Game, an extensive farm-fresh salad grazing table with ingredients sourced directly from the farm on campus, specialty house-made desserts, and on-theme drinks.

In the director's level suites, the game's theme often is served up at the game day carving station, where fine dining meets good-natured fun. For one game this past season against the University of Oregon Ducks, SDHA chefs served Peking duck Banh Mi with house-made pickled daikon, cilantro-scallion polenta cake, and hoisin sauce. For the long-standing rivalry between Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley, where the winning team is ceremoniously awarded the coveted Stanford Axe trophy, the carving station featured tomahawk chops.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEITH UEDA | STANFORD UNIVERSITY, RESIDENTIAL & DINING ENTERPRISES

Guests may find tempura shrimp tacos at one of the action stations in the director's level stadium suite at Stanford Stadium on the university campus in California.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICE P'01 STANFORD UNIVERSITY, RESIDENTIAL & DINING ENTERPRISES

A dessert table showcases creative fresh-baked treats from Decadence, Stanford University's on-campus sweets shop, at the game of Stanford against the University of California, Berkley Golden Bears at Stanford Stadium on the California campus.

Other carving station offerings during the season include an always-changing menu of signature sandwiches such as rib-eye French dip or grilled lamb and beef gyros. There's also a featured game day salad composed of perfectly curated ingredients—for example, a fuyu persimmon salad with lacinato kale, candied pecans, pomegranate arils, and maple cider vinaigrette.

Other elevated options are a raw bar with jumbo shrimp and lobster tails, Dungeness crab salad sandwiches, and freshly brewed affogatos with Italian gelato. At the bar, guests can choose from fine and sparkling wines, craft beers, or house-made artisan mocktails that vary from game to game.

HIGH-TOUCH SERVICE

The director's suites host up to 450 guests per game, including Stanford university leaders, donors, board members, and VIPs—and exceptional service is a critical component. In addition to providing hands-on service at the carving station, SDHA chefs deliver a memorable and personalized experience at action stations, which offer even more variety and help meet the diverse dietary needs of the campus community. For example, assembled-to-order street tacos, fresh pasta stations, a risotto bar, or San Francisco-style cioppino over herbed orzo with Gilroy garlic sourdough bread allow guests to customize their plates precisely to their liking.

PRECISION TIMING

The suite catering program proved a major success in its first season, and regular attendees enjoyed the camaraderie with fellow spectators and the culinary team they encountered game after game. To keep these guests engaged and delighted throughout the season—and for the duration of each game—the SDHA team has designed variety into its game day menus and orchestrated a unique strategy for timing service.

SAMPLE MENU

Theme: Barbecue Cuisine

Available all game:

- **Featured game day salad:** Fuyu persimmon salad with lacinato kale, candied pecans, and pomegranate arils with a maple cider vinaigrette
- **Featured game day carving station:** Bourbon-glazed baron of beef or tomahawk chops, truffle and herb gratin potatoes, grilled asparagus, house-made barbecue Kennebec potato chips, buttered herb ciabatta, hot honey butter, and house-made pickles

Timed specials:

- **First quarter:** Risotto bar with herb-roasted chicken or pulled delicata squash with green onions, sour cream, sauteed mushrooms, and diced bacon
- **After second quarter starts:** Fried chicken sandwich with pimento beer cheese and hot honey on a toasted croissant bun

Raw bar: Jumbo shrimp and lobster tails with cocktail sauce, chipotle aioli, and lemons

Halftime only: Local cheese and charcuterie boards

Mocktails:

- Arnold Palmer
- Strawberry lemonade
- Mint julep

Beer, Champagne, and wine offerings

During each home game, chefs roll out new menu items for each quarter, and the day's dishes aren't shared in advance, saving the reveal until visitors arrive. That element of anticipation and surprise keeps guests engaged to the end—even when the action on the field isn't going their way.

STEPPED-UP SURROUNDINGS

In addition to premium food and beverage and the timing of service, R&DE's Strategic Communications & Marketing team redesigned the decor in the director's level concessions area to elevate the look of the service line to match the heightened experience.

The team worked with Stanford donors and collaborated with other departments across the university to secure original memorabilia that showcases the rich history of Stanford Cardinal football.

Now, behind the Stanford chefs creating an exciting culinary experience is a gallery wall of historic photographs, autographed jerseys, game balls, and other nostalgic items representing legendary

Stanford athletes such as John Elway, Jim Plunkett, Andrew Luck, Christian McCaffrey, and others. The redesign adds to the wow factor, sparks conversation during service, and provides an extra boost of school spirit.

While the 2024 suite menus are expected to have a fresh slate of all-new themes as Stanford football takes its place in the ACC, one can only imagine what delicacy the university's all-star culinary team might cook up for the season's home opener against the Texas Christian University Horned Frogs. *Cuisses de grenouille*, anyone? ■



KELLY KILLIAN is a journalist and consultant for R&DE. She has spent more than a decade covering the restaurant and noncommercial food service industry—including overseeing content for *FoodService Director*, *Restaurants & Institutions*, and *Foodservice Equipment Reports*—and is a frequent speaker and panel moderator at industry events, including the National Restaurant Association Show.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEITH UEDA | STANFORD UNIVERSITY, RESIDENTIAL & DINING ENTERPRISES

To build excitement, some menu items such as sushi are offered only during certain quarters of games at Stanford Stadium on the Stanford University campus in California.

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Sustainability Served Up Right

REUSABLE PRODUCTS CAN HELP COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REVOLUTIONIZE THEIR DINING EXPERIENCE

BY THE NACAS COMMUNICATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MORE AND MORE higher education institutions are positioning themselves to be local and global leaders in sustainability, creating campuses where it's a chief priority.

From renewable energy initiatives to recycling and composting programs to campus gardens, colleges and universities have been expanding their approach to sustainability, from enhancing building efficiencies to improving campus services across their institutional landscapes.

By doing so, they are essentially creating microcommunities where students and faculty and staff members can actively engage in various sustainability efforts that, in turn, can hopefully translate into a more sustainable lifestyle at home and in their communities for the long term.

Applicants and students are also paying attention to the demonstrated commitments of colleges and universities to sustainability when they are making their decision to enroll or remain there. More than 60% of students said these efforts affect whether they choose to attend a particular higher education institution, according to a 2024 Princeton Review survey.

An emerging contributor to the green technology and sustainability market is the reusable product, which requires less manufacturing and results in less waste. In food services, these products are bowls and cups that call for colleges and universities to adopt a holistic approach not only to distributing and collecting them but also to encouraging people to use them.

To learn more about these reusable products and their unique contribution to meeting institutions' sustainability goals, *College Services* interviewed NACAS Business Partner Michael "Hutch" Hutchison, business development manager of deSter Corporation, which provides reusable service ware to food service industries.

College Services: Why have reusable products grown in popularity?

Michael "Hutch" Hutchison: The popularity of reusable products has grown quite simply because of education. Higher education is the primary focus for reuse at this present time, given that the students themselves are educated about the effects of plastics in the soil and microplastics in



Reusable bowls are tracked using quick response (QR) codes and radio frequency identification (RFID) tags.

their bodies, as well as the ongoing problem of manufacturing pollution for single-use plastics.

CS: How can the card systems many colleges and universities currently use be trained to track reusable products that use quick response (QR) codes and radio frequency identification (RFID) tags?

MHH: The card systems are easily adaptable to many of the total solution provider systems. Like any other account-based system, the swipe cards can keep track of who has the reusable product, how long they have had it, and when and where they returned it on campus.

Total solution providers like Reusables.com (see the *Business Partner Spotlight* featuring Jason Hawkins, CEO and co-founder of Reusables.com, on page 22) or Topanga.io walk the colleges and universities through the entire process and provide the necessary support. Once the system is set up, it's quite remarkable how efficient it is to export reusable products to students or faculty and staff members and import the reusable products back to campus inventory.

CS: What is the typical path a reusable product takes from the time it is given to the student to the time it is returned to a designated on-campus location?

MHH: According to data I have just seen, it's typically three days. Day 4 typically results in the user being charged for the container until that container is scanned back into the campus inventory.

CS: Bowls and cups are typically reusable, but utensils are not. Why?

MHH: I wish I had a clever answer. The reality is travel. It's that simple. In-hall dining services use china that, in itself, is sustainable as far as cutlery is concerned. A compost-certified sustainable utensil also seems to be a good fit.

We do make reusable cutlery, but the pressed paper cutlery we offer is more acceptable to operations because the tracking or tagging of reusable cutlery just does not make sense for two reasons: The RFID tag would have to be custom-made to fit the cutlery, and a QR code would just be too small to be effectively read. The other is the return rate would be nominal as the



Reusable products come in various sizes and are long-lasting and easy to clean.

cutlery itself would not necessarily fit in the container upon return. The afterthought of, "Oh, shoot! I have to grab my fork," is not something that comes to the front of mind for many of us running late daily.

After seeing my son's college apartment for four years, I'm convinced most college rooms have some type of spatial vortex that would lose any type of reusable cutlery.

CS: **What would the cost savings look like for a college or university using reusable products?**

MHH: We did some simple calculation expectation for first-year savings. For example, 1,500 diners using a 25 cent/container seven times a week for 36 weeks costs the dining service operation \$113,400 annually. Using a reusable container, with washing logistics, a smart deposit system cost, and scanning equipment cost factored into the equation, costs 18 cents per use, or \$68,040. That is a calculated annual savings of \$45,360. Those calculations are based on a 36-week academic year. If that dining service operation can convince administration to continue to extrapolate year-over-year savings from the switch of single-use to reusable, that operation can fund its own capital equipment in perpetuity.

CS: **If a college or university is weighing whether to offer reusable products, what issues should they consider before approaching a business partner?**

MHH: Nothing really changes with reusables. The warewashing process is still done by staff, so no changes would need to be implemented for that process. Inventory is actually delegated to the system upon use and return, making that the easiest part of the change to reusable. The upfront costs absorbed in the first year are indicated by the calculations in the previous question.

CS: **How can reusable products help higher education institutions meet their sustainability goals?**

MHH: Many colleges and universities are making the switch to fiber-based, paper, and reusable products because the student body is demanding that change. In some cases, legislation and campus communities are demanding solutions to single-use plastic. Reaching any campuswide sustainable goal is far easier if sustainable products are in the mix of everyday campus life. Some will argue that plastics use less of this and less of that, but the truth is sustainable does not fill landfills permanently, and at least in our case, we recycle 100% of the water in making our fiber-based products. For reuse, we have discussions in place about how we take back the reusable product and

recycle it into another product, making the choice to go reusable for campuses a positive move toward the wider goal of sustainability.

CS: What are the legislative and economic forces driving the shift to reusable products from paper, fiber, and even recyclables?

MHH: Legislation in Canada has far outpaced that of the United States, and the investments in green solutions in Canada and the European Union have proven effective at removing single-use plastics, mainly in cutlery and consumer packaged goods items from grocery stores. Takeout meals produced in grocery stores, for example, have moved to fiber, and in Canada, the push is on to use reusable systems even for "in-house" dining at the grocery location.

There have been many legislative conversations centered around a single-use plastics ban but very few legislative actions across the United States. New York has been the leader in ridding its state of single-use takeout containers made of polystyrene; however, mineral-filled polypropylene containers are still allowed for use by restaurants. New York has recently instituted a ban on putting single-use plastic into the takeout bags without the customer asking for those items. That legislation is definitely a positive step in the right direction and good news that pressed paper cutlery will now be at the forefront and not an afterthought for distribution partners and restaurants.

Canada's proposed ban on plastics as a whole hit a legislative snag with petroleum-based manufacturers who argued that health care-related items had to be exempted from the legislative action. The legislation has been put on hold until the legislature can sort out exact verbiage on single-use plastic given such items as intravenous fluid bags. That proposed ban was a bit shortsighted and points out the complexities of ensuring legislation is thorough.

FAST FACTS

- Polystyrene is a type of plastic used in Styrofoam.
- Mineral-filled polypropylene is a type of resin blended with various mineral fillers, including talc, calcium carbonate, mica, glass fibers, or other reinforcing materials.
- Warewashing is the process of cleaning and sanitizing reusable products.

For applications like takeout containers in the United States and Canada, paper- and fiber-based solutions offer an excellent alternative to single-use plastic. You see many of those incorporated, especially in the grocery stores. At present, however, the challenge is that food items need to stay moist for up to two days in a refrigerated display case. With no liner in the fiber, that product can dry out quickly.

CS: Will artificial intelligence (AI) have a place in the reusable product industry?

MHH: Like many of us, I think AI will learn campus habits as to when and where inventories will need to be refreshed and picked up for cleaning if the warewashing is central. AI also will be able to predict a certain day, time, and menu item that is more popular and prompt operations management to prepare for increased volume. The same would be true even if a warewash partner takes the reusable off campus. ■



Canada is exploring using reusable bowls for "in-house" dining at grocery locations.

member spotlight: Aesha Brown



Aesha Brown, Director of Business Services Projects and onecard, Sheridan College

NACAS members are leaders who help create hospitable, well-rounded campus communities worldwide through the various campus services they ensure are provided. In this feature, *College Services* hosts a question-and-answer segment in which we introduce our members. For this issue, we interview Aesha Brown, director of business services projects and onecard at Sheridan College in Ontario, Canada.

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

Aesha Brown: In my role, I support business services (bookstore, food services, parking, onecard, printing, student housing, conference services, and mailroom) with special projects and new initiatives. I lead projects by organizing cross-functional teams, developing processes, and ensuring timelines and milestones are met with strategic oversight over the onecard department.

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

AB: One of the biggest benefits I get out of being a NACAS member is the networking and collaboration opportunities. The other benefit I enjoy is the NACAS Marketplace, which provides me with a number of resources to guide my decision-making and help me with problem-solving. I've also taken advantage of the online education sessions and webinars, which are available live or on demand. Additionally, the online NACAS Lounge is a unique platform that allows me to ask questions, get feedback, and share ideas. *College Services* magazine is another great resource. I read it each quarter, and I am often inspired by the stories and innovative services and products found at other schools.

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

AB: Years ago, I attended my first NACAS conference; that would be the only time I attended a NACAS conference due to budget restraints while working at a previous institution. Just over 10 years ago, when I changed institutions and started working at Sheridan College, the department I was responsible for did not have a direct affiliation with NACAS. Recently, I was promoted at Sheridan, and my new

role is now directly aligned with NACAS again, which allowed me to attend the NACAS conference for the second time this past November. Because of this, I do consider myself a fairly new member, and I look forward to networking and meeting other members in similar college services and gaining insights that can advance my career.

CS: What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

AB: My greatest professional accomplishment is being invited to Apple headquarters in California as a guest speaker to discuss our journey with implementing and delivering the digital campus card project I led at Sheridan College. We were the first college in Canada to have a mobile campus card in the Apple Wallet. That project also led me to win an honorable mention award at the Canadian Association of University Business Officers.

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

AB: "The Office," "Suits," and "The Blacklist." ■

If you would like to contact Brown, she can be reached at aesha.brown@sheridancollege.ca.

member spotlight: Alexandra 'Lexie' Raczka



Alexandra "Lexie" Raczka, Sustainability Director, Boston University Dining Services

NACAS members are leaders who help create hospitable, well-rounded campus communities worldwide through the various campus services they ensure are provided. In this feature, *College Services* hosts a question-and-answer segment in which we introduce our members. For this issue, we interview Alexandra "Lexie" Raczka, sustainability director for Boston University Dining Services in Massachusetts.

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

Alexandra "Lexie" Raczka: I am the sustainability director for Boston University Dining Services. I oversee all aspects of sustainability—sourcing, waste reduction and diversion, low-impact menu programming, etc.—for our residential dining halls, retail dining locations, catering operations, and convenience stores.

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

ALR: Being a part of NACAS provides such a wonderful opportunity to network with individuals. The sustainability space is so collaborative, so the chance to meet and engage with others with similar goals—as well as obstacles—and learn from best practices is invaluable.

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

ALR: Over the past year, I have collaborated with Ohio State University to share our experiences with reusable to-go container programs. These conversations have been insightful to further the development of our program at Boston University, especially around the introduction of RFID (radio frequency identification) tracking.

CS: What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

ALR: I am most proud of developing Choose to Reuse, a first-of-its-kind reusable to-go container program for retail dining on college campuses. The program, which was more than 2 ½ years in the making, provides a seamless experience for guests to participate in a tracked reusable container program while also being easy for operators to manage. The program

has seen widespread adoption across the BU community, reducing the use of disposable packaging by more than 78%. In the first year of the program, we converted over 180,000 single-use containers to reusables, while also generating savings and revenue to fund the expansion of the program and support other initiatives. Beyond the success we have seen at BU, this solution has now been adopted by dining programs at other colleges and universities, supporting waste reduction on a broader scale.

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

ALR: I recently watched the third season of "Only Murders in the Building." I highly recommend the series if you haven't watched it yet! ■

If you would like to contact Raczka, she can be reached at araczka@bu.edu.

business partner spotlight: Jason Hawkins



Jason Hawkins, CEO and Co-Founder, Reusables.com

Business Partners offer various unique campus service solutions that meet the needs of NACAS' higher education members and their school communities. In this feature, *College Services* hosts a question-and-answer segment in which we introduce our Business Partners. For this issue, we interview Jason Hawkins, CEO and co-founder of Reusables.com.

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

Jason Hawkins: I'm the CEO and co-founder of Reusables.com. We're a leading reuse platform for colleges and universities in North America.

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

JH: NACAS was a tremendous experience for us. It allowed us to meet with the decision-makers across the industry who are looking for solutions to single-use packaging. We were able to showcase our latest technology, spend quality time with prospects during the events, and have a chance to build those lasting relationships that we take pride in.

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

JH: We had the privilege of meeting Jose Martinez, general manager of dining services at Pomona College in Claremont, CA. Jose had been running his own successful reuse system at his campus and was looking for some upgrades that we had an answer for, especially related to the return rate. We were able to build our relationship at NACAS and actually went to California the next week to visit his campus. A month later, Jose came to Vancouver, BC, to visit one of our flagship clients, Simon Fraser University. We're proud to be launching with Pomona this year, and it really was all thanks to the relationship we built at NACAS.

CS: What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

JH: I was listed in the "Forbes 30 Under 30" for 2024.

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

JH: "Ted Lasso." ■

If you would like to contact Hawkins, he can be reached at jason@reusables.com.

UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF NACAS FOR YOUR CAREER

BY NACAS

Seeking an opportunity to inspire your career to new levels? NACAS is your resource for growing your professional background and connecting with a network of your peers. Check out the details of the upcoming Women in Leadership Summit and some highlights from the Senior Executive Summit.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



We are excited to announce that registration is open for the 2024 Women in Higher Ed Leadership Summit. This year's summit will take place September 22–25, 2024, at the Hotel Viata in Austin, TX.

The summit is focused on inspiring women in higher education leadership. It will feature intimate networking experiences, engaging speakers, and roundtable discussions on current issues impacting professional women in auxiliary services and higher education.

This empowering event brings together influential leaders in higher education to inspire, educate, and advocate women's leadership development. Join us in building on the success of the 2023 Women in Leadership Summit, which attracted over 60 attendees who rated the event as exceeding expectations. We look forward to welcoming you and supporting your commitment to advancing leadership excellence in the collegiate auxiliary services industry.

This year's keynote speaker, Jan Hargrave, will present on "Persuasion and Influence Utilizing Effective Nonverbal Communication in Every Conversation." This session will allow attendees to:

- Master the art of making a positive first impression.
- Read body language to enhance your communication skills.
- Build stronger relationships through trust and rapport.

Don't miss out on this session and many more at the 2024 Women in Higher Education Leadership Summit!

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SUMMIT

The 2024 Senior Executive Summit, held at the picturesque Wigwam Resort in Litchfield, AZ, brought together 42 attendees, including senior leaders in auxiliary services from elite higher education institutions across the country. Alongside them were esteemed Business Partners, contributing to a rich exchange of insights and strategies. Also in attendance were members of the NACAS staff, including CEO Rich Steele, whose presence added a depth of expertise to the discussions throughout the event.

The summit featured a lineup of four distinguished speakers, each offering valuable perspectives on key industry topics. The speakers were:

- Mike Evans, award-winning speaker and author.
- Robert Berry, president of That Audit Guy Consulting Firm.
- Frank E. Ross III, Ph.D., vice president of Butler University.
- Nicole McMurray, regional vice president for the Florida region of AppleOne.

Throughout the event, attendees engaged in thought-provoking sessions and networking opportunities, fostering collaboration and innovation within auxiliary services. From insightful keynote addresses to in-depth roundtable discussions, the summit provided a platform for senior executives to explore emerging trends and best practices shaping the field.

As the summit concluded, participants left with enhanced knowledge, valuable connections, a renewed vision for driving excellence in auxiliary services leadership, and tools to continue rewriting the higher education narrative. ■



PHOTO COURTESY OF NACAS

Leaders in auxiliary services gather for the 2024 Senior Executive Summit in Arizona.

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