

by Debbie Cottrell

Message from our President

April 2021!

Thinking back to April 2020, we only had a small glimpse of things to come, and none of us could have imagined the challenges we would work to overcome. The year has been a tense battlefield for everyone in the college store industry as we not only tried to keep our students and staff members healthy, continue to support our vendors, and also keep our businesses continuing to be an integral part of our campus systems.

Many have survived immense losses, and we are all weary from battle. However, I do believe the worst is behind us and there is light at the end of a long, long tunnel. Vaccines are now available, many states are relaxing mandates, students are back on our campuses, and life can begin to return to a little bit of normalcy.

It is, however, a “new” normal we begin to encounter now. There are many lessons to be learned from our experiences over the past year that should and will influence how we do things in the future. Our campuses learned new ways to teach and impact students. Course materials changed significantly with the sudden shift to digital options. Inclusive Access delivery continues to quickly grow on most campuses. We adapted to new ways to safely open our stores, and found ways to offer creative pickup options. Our campuses found safe ways to return our students to our campuses. All of us learned to function in our workplace environments with a myriad of strict policies and procedures. We learned tremendously from our experiences!

And yet we continue to adapt. We have attended webinars, viewed products, and interacted with our vendors virtually. We have seen things we would not have been able to see in person such as tours of warehouses and production sites. Many of us attended a variety of webinars plus virtual spring meetings for ICBA and CAMEX. While we would love to return to interacting in person, there are benefits of the new ways we found to relate to one another. As an example, over 900 college store personnel were able to attend CAMEX 2021 Reimagined! This is many more people than would have been able to travel to the meeting in person, even if we had budgets and/or travel was allowed.

I suggest that as we look to the future, our “new” normal become a compilation of how we operated in the past plus the addition of procedures we learned through the last year. If we function in this manner, we will continue to adapt and grow stronger. Even though the past year was difficult and challenging, we survived and we are all much more resilient today because of our experiences!

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SWCBA President, Debbie Cottrell, has been elected by the National Association of College Store (NACS) members to serve a three year term as one of three trustees-at-large for NACS.

[READ MORE](#)

Store Spotlight

Alvin Community College Store



by Vicki Marvel

Alvin Community College was established in 1948, a great year, since that's the same year I was established. We are located between Houston and Galveston, Texas so we have the best of both worlds, city culture and sandy beaches.



ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
THE COLLEGE STORE

We have an FTE of 5,000 students which we would LOVE to see back on campus! We have 3 full time employees and two part time.

Our store has thrived due to wonderful relationships with vendors, networking with SWCBA members and ACC faculty, staff and students. Also our industry partners such as ICBA and NACS have been great assets in helping us succeed.

Our digital and all -inclusive model is continually growing. Last month we were recognized by the Board of Regents for increasing our All- Inclusive Digital Model by 196%. Woo Hoo!

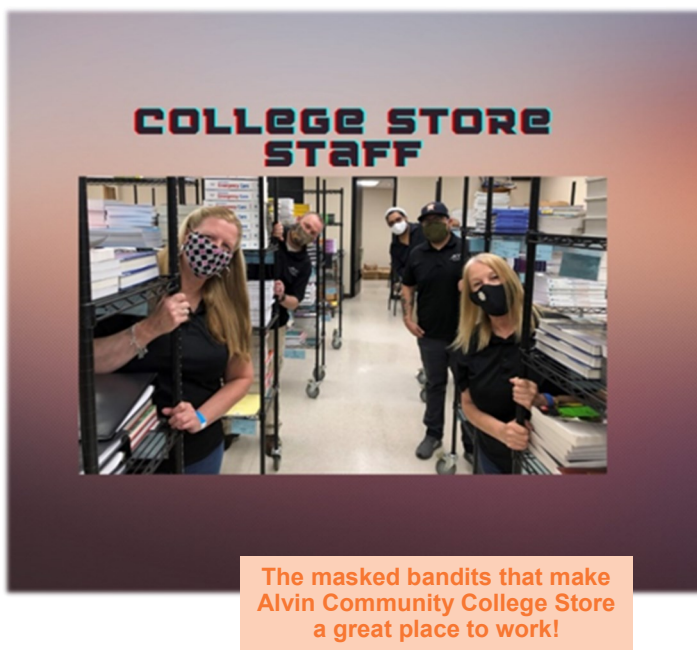
We have been exposed.....

Covid, Curbside, Construction!

Soon after Covid hit we were moved out of our building for a total renovation. We are stuffed into three classrooms where we cannot have an open store. We learned how to do Curbside deliveries really quick! Talk about adding "steps" to your tracker! We initiated virtual Buy Back which is wonderful! Possibly will be back in our store the end of May 2021. Can't wait to get back into a new store, Coffee Bar and Cafeteria to operate!

We have used this time to add tons of products to our website, add the shop capability on our FB and Instagram and learn how to add promotions on our website. We just purchased a heat press and will begin printing our own t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, etc.

Having an awesome staff that is always ready for new projects makes things fun at our store!



The masked bandits that make Alvin Community College Store a great place to work!

Vendor Spotlight

CI Sport was founded in 1990 in Fargo, North Dakota. A couple hospitality entrepreneurs created the company out of need to outfit bars and restaurants with decorated uniforms, apparel, and souvenirs. Over the years this grew into a nationally recognized supplier of collegiate and corporate apparel. In the highly competitive business of decorated apparel, CI Sport has gained market share with its 24-piece minimums, innovative designs, and fast turnaround times.



CI Sport partners with college bookstores and other retail partners from coast to coast. CI currently holds hundreds of collegiate licenses and works closely with the top major licensing companies. Our marketing and development teams continually produce cutting edge designs and on-trend fashion garments.

In early 2020, CI Sport moved from its downtown home of 30 years to a new, state of the art, 73,000 square foot facility in southwest Fargo. We host a complete “in-house” facility which is rare on a large scale in our industry. All decoration production, sales, art design, digitizing, and inventory is held under one roof. Our expanded production facility allows us to remain a top producer of custom decorated apparel in the collegiate, corporate and resort industries. No job is too big or too small. Our customers get the personal attention of a hometown company that is capable of big business.



The Truth About Limited Access Fees

Did you know that freight carriers often classify college campuses as limited access, resulting in costly fees? PartnerShip published a helpful guide that outlines what campus stores need to know about limited access fees and what you can do about them. You'll learn:

- How carriers define limited access
- What factors determine if a location is considered limited access
- How to avoid breaking the bank over limited access delivery fees

[Learn more](#)



Vendor Spotlight-Continued



3 Must-do's to Compete in Digital Course Materials Sales

Happy Spring from the team at Willo Labs!

We are excited to see our campus store partners and digital adoptions ramping up for Summer and Fall starts. The #1 thing we hear from our campus stores lately is that it's getting tougher to compete with direct-to-student publisher sales. But the good news is, the market data supports that publishers *need* campus stores to optimize digital sales. This means you *can* compete - and direct from our partner stores, here are the top 3 ways . . .

1. **Compare your digital pricing & sell-thru to Publisher sites:** Publishers are generally decreasing or eliminating the margin available on the Net Price to stores. Take your top 30 highest enrollment courses with digital adoptions (especially courseware) and: a) check your sell-through, and b) compare your Net and Retail prices to the price offered on the publisher websites.

What to do? If your prices are higher and your sell through is below 85% average, *consider an enterprise business model for digital course materials*. Details can vary, but an enterprise model can convert all the various publisher-based business models to a campus-specific business model. Think of it as similar to Inclusive Access, but maintaining a student choice to buy instead of the opt out model.

2. **Check your tech partners' eCommerce pricing:** Also compare your pricing (especially for eBooks) to your eBook tech partners' eCommerce sites. They may have lower pricing and/or have shorter subscription terms that cost less than what's being offered for sale through your store.

What to do? Like #1 above, this is a business model problem. Approach the publisher with all courses (with enrollment numbers) using their company's titles, along with sell thru, your current pricing and the lower pricing you found. With the full picture of your annual business with that publisher, request competitive terms. If this doesn't work, also consider the enterprise business model mentioned above, so you have a broader initiative behind your request for better terms.

3. **Publicize your Campus payment options:** Did you know that about 60% of the money spent on course materials in the US comes from Financial Aid? Does your Store allow students to use Financial Aid or bursar accounts as a payment option? What to do: If yes, make sure everyone knows this is a service only your Store can offer. Campus Store services are so crucial to ensuring students buy the right materials early in their course and succeed in their classes. It's also a strong point for negotiating an enterprise business model with publishers. They need you to access that source of payment, so they have a vested interest in ensuring your store has competitive pricing, too.

If you would like more information about enterprise business models or help with any of these topics, we are always happy to talk. Send us an email: info@willolabs.com We can connect you with some of our store partners who have had success with campus-based models, like Georgia Southern University, West Georgia University, and many more.

CAMEX 2021

CAMEX 2021 Reimagined – and was it ever reimagined!

When it became apparent last year that CAMEX 2021 could not be a face-to-face event in Atlanta as planned, NACS staff members began an extensive search for virtual meeting platforms and how best to host a virtual event. Those of us who attended the East

Regional Trade Show on October 29th had the opportunity to experience the Remo Networking platform. NACS also hosted a variety of roundtable and webinar events via Zoom. CAMEX 2021 Reimagined used both Zoom and Remo platforms, providing a creative background for sessions and roundtables, plus networking opportunities for attendees.



The all-virtual CAMEX 2021 Reimagined, February 22 – 26, had over 900 store attendees and 95 vendors. The show included networking opportunities in the Sunrise Session to kick off each day, education and professional development sessions, trade-show exhibits, and concluded with additional networking opportunities.

Keynote speakers including Cassandra Worthy, Richard Keeling, Jeff Havens, Jamie Riley, Shasta Nelson, Chad Littlefield, and Jay Baer challenged, informed, and entertained attendees as keynote speakers. Industry peers and professionals hosted sessions and roundtables on a variety of topics including marketing, open-to-buy techniques, government relations, apparel trends, and product photography. The tradeshow provided the opportunity to browse vendor booths and also network and chat with representatives.

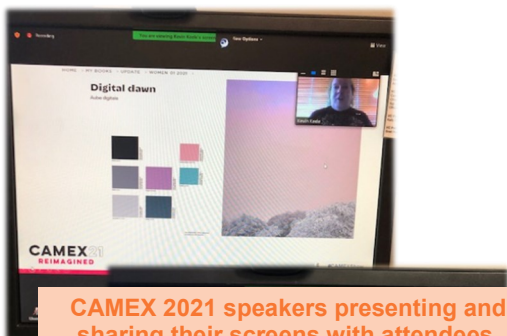
Comments in the recap session were very positive. Many commented that this CAMEX not only gave us insight on how to improve our store operations, but much content was directed to help us each grow and develop personally. While attendees certainly missed the opportunity to see each other and connect in person, CAMEX 2021 Reimagined was truly a highly successful event and provided a greater opportunity for a larger number of store personnel representing many campuses to be part of the conference.



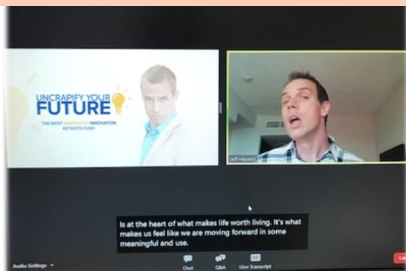
by Debbie Cottrell



Your SWCBA Membership fee is due. Thank you for continuing to support our association. Contact **Starla Marshall** for more information.



CAMEX 2021 speakers presenting and sharing their screens with attendees.



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Got News?

How is your bookstore handling COVID-19? Buyback? Closures? Online sales? How are you keeping connected with students? Graduation postponed or cancelled? How are you managing your team from home? How are vendors staying connected with bookstores? Any vendors out there having product delivery issues? Also, bookstores and vendors can pass on any job openings that they are needing to appear in the next newsletter. Share article links you wish to see in the next newsletter as well.



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Let's stay in touch!

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stay connected!

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Industry News

Investment bank and consulting firm, Tyton Partners, surveyed 800 instructors to produce [The Impact of 2020 on Introductory Faculty and Their Students](#) report.

National Student Clearinghouse Research Center [report on college enrollment](#).

SWCBA nomination and voting process has started. Please watch for emails from Starla for more information. Interested in serving on a committee? Contact [Starla Marshall](#) for more information.

ICBA's popular Trend Chat brings fresh insights to what's hot in the college store channel. Trend Chat posts on ICBA's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

The Southwest College Bookstore Association's mission is to promote a high standard of business methods and ethics among its members, unite those persons and firms engaged in the sale, manufacturing and/or distribution of products and services to the campus communities of its member states, promote the common interest of individuals and companies who provide those products and services, assist members in their efforts to serve their respective campuses and disseminate industry ideas and information among its members. The SWCBA is a 5 state regional association who unites people/services to serve the college community.

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