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THE JOURNAL for ONE STOP EXCELLENCE

JFOSE
JOURNAL FOR ONE STOP EXCELLENCE

VOLUME 1
ISSUE 2
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EDITORIAL

JENNIFER VADEN

PRESIDENT

VADEN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSULTING

STUDENT USING AI

When I first heard the words "artificial intelligence" (AI) in the workplace, it conjured ideas found only in science fiction novels and Stanley Kubrick movies. Then, ChatGPT burst onto the scene in late 2022, capturing the imagination of our students and accelerating our evaluation of such technology use in higher education. Educause Review's QuickPoll in April 2023 showed that a majority (83%) of respondents believe that AI will "profoundly change higher education in the next three to five years" (McCormack 2023, Table 1). As student services professionals, we have services professionals, we have an extraordinary opportunity to embrace the potential of AI now and be leaders of change at our institutions.

As change agents, we continually seek ways to improve the service experience, particularly with technology. Some of us already utilize chatbots with AI, and a few are implementing chatbot integrations with their student information systems. Some email management software is using AI to generate and enhance email responses. Precursors to these kinds of technology were phone tree menus, frequently asked questions, canned email responses, and knowledge bases. All of these tools have shown to increase staff productivity and operational efficiency.

Student service professionals and students stand to benefit most from tools like AI that can handle routine inquiries and transactions in a conversationally personal way and in native languages. Considering the budgetary challenges of the last few years, we are presently tasked with optimizing our dwindling staffing levels to meet student expectations. AI affords us a chance to achieve scalability in our virtual self-service offerings, expanding our tier 1 support to resolve an unlimited number of student inquiries 24/7. When the inquiry becomes more complex than AI can manage, a staff member can step in to assist. In this way, we can conserve our most valuable resource, our people, for more nuanced inquiries that require a human touch

In the same April 2023 poll by Educause Review, 45% of respondents revealed that AI makes them nervous (Table 1). This is not surprising. Critical considerations include data privacy and security, system integration, new technology adoption rate among students, and impacts still unknown. The most fascinating issue raised is the risk for "hallucination," which happens when AI "create[s] convincing language that is flat-out wrong or does not exist in their training data" (Metz 2023, para. 8). These risks are important to recognize and debate but should not be perceived as insurmountable barriers to adopting AI.

As an experiment, I asked ChatGPT, "What is the future of the use of artificial intelligence in higher education student service interactions?" After listing key areas of impact in higher education such as the use of chatbots and virtual assistants like Alexa or Siri, it reminds us that "it is important to ensure ethical and responsible implementation" and speculates that the "future of AI in higher education student services interactions holds great promise, transforming the way students receive support, learn, and navigate their academic journey" (OpenAI, 2023). I couldn't agree more, and I promise this is not a hallucination.

Jennifer Vaden
President of Vaden Higher Education Consulting

ONE STOP AT CWI

LUIS CALOCA
COLLEGE OF WESTERN IDAHO
DEAN OF STUDENT ACCESS

CWI CAMPUS MAIN BUILDING

I started working in higher education back in 2003 in a part time position working for a small scholarship program at Boise State University. I was the career and follow-up counselor. It was my responsibility to assist the students with finding work study positions, positions off campus and basically anything that would help them connect their learning to their career. I did that for about four years before I transitioned into a full-time position as a recruiter for the tech college. About a year and a half after that I became one of the two first recruiters for the College of Western Idaho (CWI). CWI was founded in May of 2007 when Ada and Canyon County voters decided they wanted a community college district. I came on board on July 1, 2008 and have been with CWI ever since, while slowly moving up the chain as we continue to expand. I started managing one of our One-Stop student services offices in September 2009. Then I managed our call center and about 9.5 years ago I became the director. In July 2021 I became the Dean.

Luis Caloca
College of Western Idaho
Dean of Student Access

CWI is, the only Idaho-based community college within a 1.5 hour vicinity [of Boise]. It is a newer institution. We started offering classes spring of 2009. Our largest student population is our dual-credit population: we serve about 12,500 dual-credit students. Next in size is our college matriculated students. As a community college, we also serve our students that are learning English, those that are picking up basic skills, and we have a number of short-term learning programs as well. This area tends to be one of the fastest growing for several years in a row. We have been the number two or three on the list of fastest growing cities. Nampa and Meridian have tended to be in the top ten list at least the last three years, possibly as many as five. We're seeing a lot of growth in this area and that has translated to a lot more inquiries with the institution as well. We are about to expand in size and get a new health and science building as well as a new student-services building. We're trying to get ourselves out of some leased space to serve our Boise community. We started up so fast and grew so quickly that we ended up getting into a number of leased spaces. We were the fastest growing college in the United States for about four years in a row when we first began. It's been quite the ride. Starting up a new institution, and especially starting up as quickly as we did.

It's always health. There are many students that are interested in nursing Surge Tech, LPN, all those health programs. There's a lot of demand there and we are about to expand that as well. It's my understanding that here within the next year or two we expect to be approved to start offering a bachelor's degree in nursing, which would be the only bachelor's degree that we offer as a community college.

CWI COLLEGE OF WESTERN IDAHO

WHY CWI IMPLEMENTED ONE STOP

JFOSE: Let me go back to the start of your institution. Why did your institution implement a One-Stop model from its inception?

Luis: The director of admissions at the time—the founding director of admissions—came over from Boise State University where he was the director of admissions for the tech college. But some of his experience prior, was from the University of Minnesota system. From what I know the University of Minnesota system was one of the pioneers of the One-Stop. They've been doing it for many years. He had experience in that system and found it to be very beneficial, so when he had the opportunity to configure something from the ground up, he already knew what that would look like. He wanted to make sure the folks that worked at CWI could assist students with pretty much anything student service related.

CWI CAMPUS

BENEFITS OF A ONE STOP MODEL AT CWI

JFOSE: Now let's shift gears just a little bit to maybe a college that is considering a one-stop model. What do you believe are some of the greatest benefits from a One-Stop model with your level of experience?

Luis: We've answered this question a lot in recent years. We've been approached by at least four different institutions here in Idaho for advice on starting a One-Stop model. Several of them have implemented a One-Stop in some manner, even if it's not a replication of ours or what our system was. I would say there are two primary benefits. The first of them being efficiency when it comes to how we utilize staff. Also recognizing that within each of the different areas—be it admissions, financial aid, registration, and record services—all of those have their different peaks when it comes to traffic levels. By having somebody that could serve students in any one of those areas, you're able to balance traffic more easily. You can just leverage your staffing better than if they were just serving one area. Sometimes you're busy, sometimes you're not. There's always something to do, but being able to balance between all those different sectors is much more efficient. It allows you to prioritize whatever requires a more intimate touch, and yet still have the bandwidth to serve any other thing that creeps up in any one of those sectors. The second one is the benefit to the student. Just being able to walk that student through anything and everything. My take has always been that when a student comes in for service, they never have just one question. It's many questions. Those many questions are across different service areas. They have admissions questions. They have program specific questions. They want to know how they're going to pay. There are all these things that fall under that umbrella of being a student and we were able to answer everything for them.

JFOSE: That was one of the biggest things I found when going into a One-Stop leadership role. The students appreciated the customer service benefits that were associated with a One-Stop model where you had one person who could answer a bunch of questions from a variety of different disciplines as opposed to that student having to call the financial aid department and then reach out again and call the Registrar or Bursar or Admissions or a variety of different other offices.

CWI MAIN BUILDING

AREAS OF CAUTION

JFOSE: In the years that you were running the One-Stop model or worked with the One-Stop model, what are some areas of caution that a new college wanting to implement something like this might want to be aware of?

Luis: I would say the first is giving the One-Stop the appropriate authority. By that I mean, early on the One-Stop team and myself, we weren't given the authority necessary to have enough influence and decision-making power to facilitate processes that were at the second tier: the responsibility of others. There are some disciplines where students would have more trouble than others. As the One-Stop, we just weren't given credence when we brought up these concerns. Sometimes they fell on deaf ears. They might say, "Well, it's just the One-Stop. What do they know?" We always viewed ourselves as the canary in the coal mine and anytime that something went wrong, we were always the first to find out. It didn't matter where that issue stemmed from, students knew to go to the One-Stop and we would make sure that their issues would be resolved. In many instances, that's how we would find out. This process that's new, for example, it's not working for students. We're getting a lot of questions stemming from this one thing. That's number one. Since the One-Stop serves all students in all areas and disciplines, they need to have sufficient authority to be able to bring up concerns, propose solutions, and have those mean something. The second one being that to be able to have somebody that is highly experienced and qualified in a one-stop position. When we first started the One-Stop, it was the lowest-tiered position. As we developed our processes, procedures, and became a more experienced One-Stop, we concluded—after doing research and interviews with our team—that we needed to flip that model. Multiple interviews with our team told us that we needed to flip that model: that the folks that were front-facing staff who work directly with students need to be the most experienced. But trying to conduct that cultural shift late in the game was very difficult. It's something that I pushed for over the last three years and didn't really get a lot of traction. Though I do know that some of the counterparts that started One-Stop models did take that advice to heart and are operating in that way.

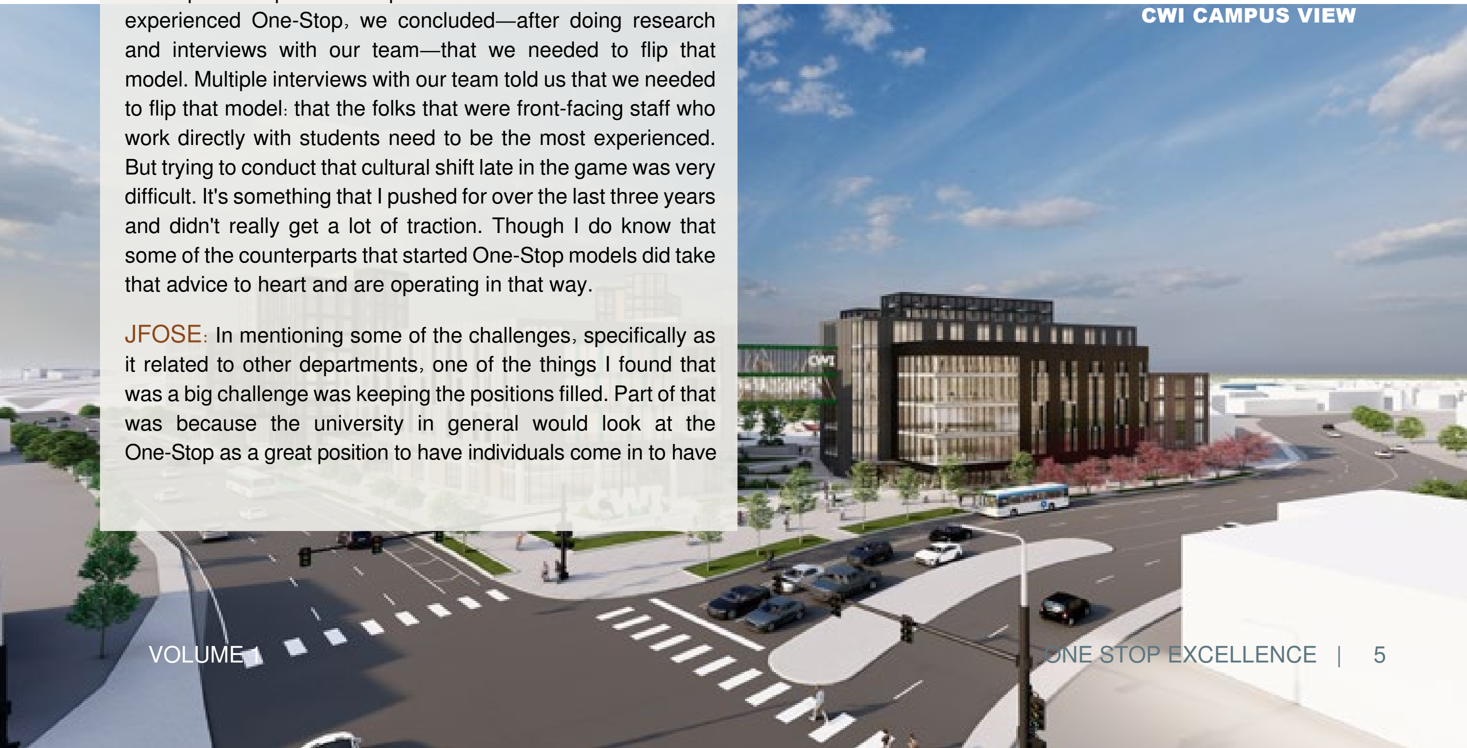
JFOSE: In mentioning some of the challenges, specifically as it related to other departments, one of the things I found that was a big challenge was keeping the positions filled. Part of that was because the university in general would look at the One-Stop as a great position to have individuals come in to have individuals come in to learn a variety of different disciplines. Then because other positions do tend to pay more—such as academic advising or positions within the specific departments that they've already specialized in understanding—that gave this person a leg up to apply for those positions and make a natural transition into those different departments. Were you experiencing anything like that as a challenge with keeping your positions filled or was it not an issue for you over at CWI?

Luis: It was definitely an issue. That was one of my early goals; to maintain a turnover rate that was less than 75%. Our department had the highest turnover rate but a lot of that was because there was no career ladder within my area. It was the lowest paid position, so folks had to move out into other departments to move up the chain. That was one of my proposed recommendations to create a tier ladder. We did have three different tiers of the One-Stop representative position that were all tied to different learning and knowledge-based outcomes. We had a thorough plan. It was just something that was never approved.

JFOSE: We did the same thing at our location as well where we had three different tiers. We had an associate level and then, after 6 months they were expected to move into a tier level two, which was a proficiency level. Then tier level three would occasionally come up for individuals that would have the ability to be involved in the hiring, training, and onboarding. One thing I wanted to return to is space. Was your One-Stop model in a dedicated space or did you have to be in located in the different departments that you helped?

Luis: We did have a dedicated One-Stop office. We had two full-service offices and a limited-service office in one of our smaller buildings. We had all the front facing team that reported directly through my department, and then we had our tier two counterparts that were also residing within the office. We also had representatives from Financial Aid, Student Accounts, and Registration and Records within our offices. We provided a tier one service for other departments, but the tier two-level folks were in other areas. For instance, our veteran certifying team is in another space. Our dual-credit team, workforce development and basic skills folks were all elsewhere, but we would still provide their tier one services.

CWI CAMPUS VIEW



FUTURE OF ONE STOP AT CWI

JFOSE: Thinking about what's coming up this next year, what are some things in terms of projects or different development ideas that CWI has on the horizon, more specifically that your student services team has on the horizon?

Luis: We are about to start implementing a customer-relationship management system (CRM). I think that was one of the primary drivers for why we decided to start moving away from a One-Stop model—primarily because a lot of people, especially in the higher levels of administration, were under the impression that the CRM would best be served by someone that tended to focus on just one piece of that student funnel. Maybe we have one team that works with prospects and gets them to that next stage of application, and an applicant to admit team, and so on. That's how the restructure is currently working. They wanted to create silos with very specific teams that had narrow, specific goals.

JFOSE: You were saying previously that your school services approximately 12,000 or in the range of 12,000 active students, is that accurate?

Luis: Let's see, I did pull that number up so we would have it. It's 30,000 students annually when you include all the student populations that we serve.

JFOSE: What would you think would be the ratio of your student support team? Individuals to the number of students that they service?

Luis: It would be about one for every 1,500.

JFOSE: Do you use a system like a QLess or did you use some other queuing system?

Luis: We love QLess. That's a great system. I was exposed to that at the University of North Dakota. When I go on vacation, I'm one of those folks that I'm just so curious and I love to learn, so I tend to visit different institutions when I'm in those areas. That's when I first came across that product. We started to learn more and just fell in love with it.

JFOSE: And what is the CRM system that you guys wanted to implement or have started to implement?

Luis: It's Element 451. They seem to be a newer company, but everything that I've seen from them so far, shows it is a very intuitive product, easy to use, visually appealing, and the folks are just great people to work with.

JFOSE: Wonderful. Well, I'm happy to hear about all these changes. Change can be a good thing in the realm of higher education, so I will be curious to loop back with you again in about a year to see how these changes have affected CWI and where CWI is at in that process. Until then, I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

ONE STOP AT UND

MARGIE EVERS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

STUDENT ACCOUNT SERVICES

UND MAIN BUILDING

I have been at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks since 2012 and UND has given me some of my greatest experiences. I started out in Student Account Services, which gave me incredibly valuable experience working one-on-one with students. My previous work experience in retail has strengthened my ability to lead our One-Stop team. I spent 28 years working in customer service and that has served me well in helping students, parents, and staff across the university.

We have a population of about 14,000 students and we have many different colleges and programs to offer to students. We have a state-of-the-art medical school, a brand-new business school, a newly renovated law school, and an incredibly successful aviation school just to name a few of our top programs.

Margie Evers
University of North Dakota
Student Accoutn Services

WHY UND IMPLEMENTED ONE STOP

JFOSE: Why did your institution decide to implement a One-Stop model?

Margie: The institution was looking at services and processes, and the bottom line was that there was a need to improve customer service and processing efficiency. One Stop was able to completely take over the Customer Service side to provide the Student Finance office with the breathing room they needed to improve the efficiency of financial aid processing.

JFOSE: As a follow up question to that, do you know about how many years you've had your One-Stop model in place?

Margie: UND opened One-Stop in 2014 inside our Memorial Union. Prior to that we had a call center called the Link, where students could have basic campus questions answered but at that time there was no physical space. One-Stop now has an office located in the hub of campus that allows students to have a physical space to get their questions answered in person.

JFOSE: What do you believe are the greatest benefits that you've seen with a One-Stop model?

Margie: As far as benefits to the students, I think they enjoy having an office where they can go and ask questions to an advisor who genuinely cares about their experience. At One-Stop, our primary focus is financial aid, billing, and university ID cards. Each of our advisors has expertise in many areas and students appreciate our ability to answer their questions quickly and effectively. Our students appreciate that we have multiple contact methods: email, phone, or walk-in appointments, this gives them the method of communication that is best for them. We're open Monday through Friday, 8:15 am to 4:30 pm and students can reach us any way they prefer during these office hours.

JFOSE: Perfect. Do you have a queuing system? Perhaps within your lobby area?

Margie: Yes, first we have a queuing system within our phone system. Our advisors are in the phone queue every day and the queue is incredibly helpful to allow students to get the fastest customer service possible. Right outside of our office space we have a queueing system that allows students that walk in and sign in to be seen by our next available advisor.

JFOSE: That leads me to two follow up questions. The first is "Does your institution utilize students?"

Margie: Yes, we do.

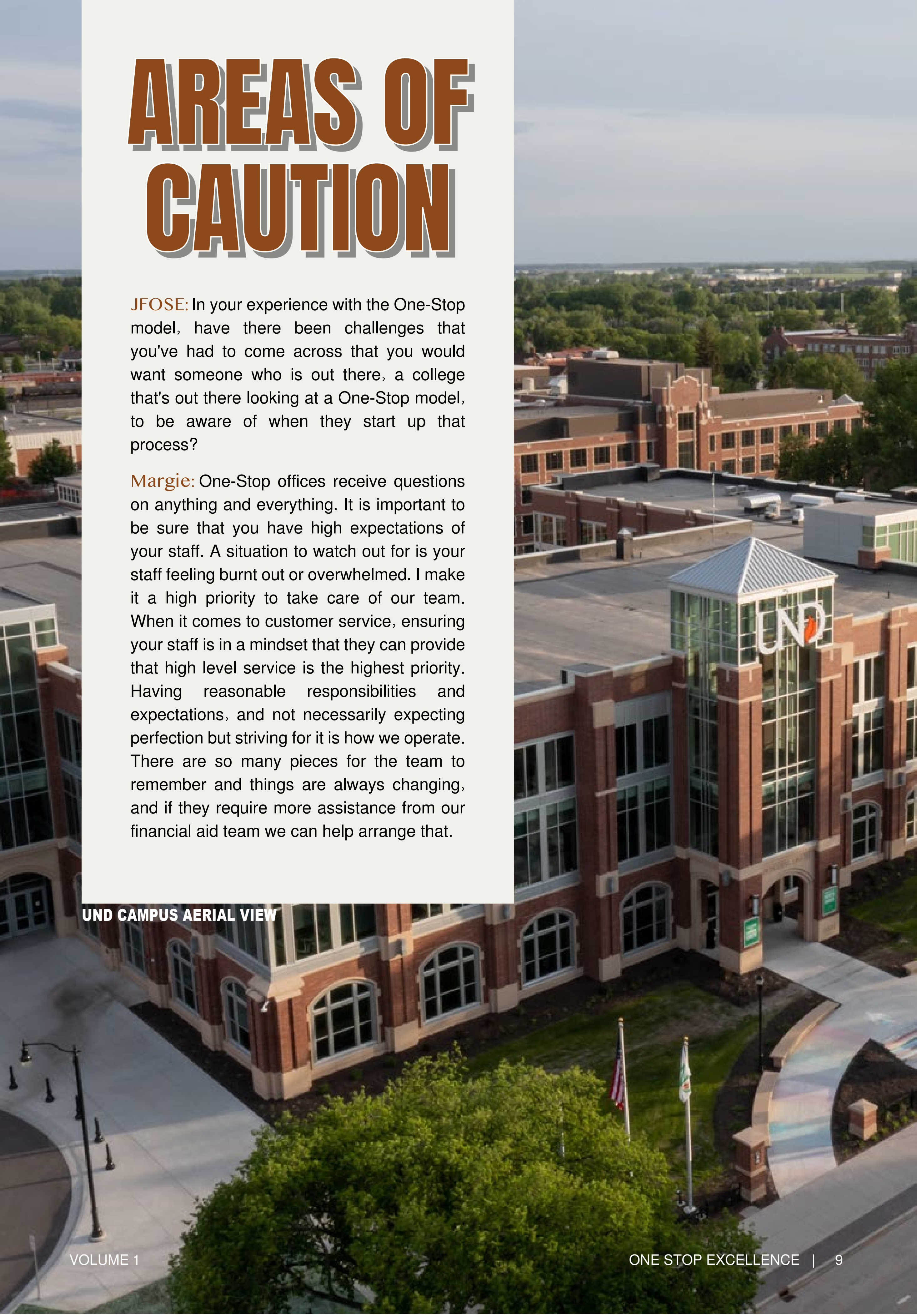
JFOSE: Regarding workers - Are they part of the initial contact stage of this process? For example, some colleges have student workers as tier one and then they move on to a tier two, which is like a One-Stop Specialist and then there's a more experienced One-Stop Specialist after that. Do you work on a similar model?

Margie: Very similar. We have students that cover the front desk, so their first greeting would be from a student employee. The student employee would find out from the student what their needs are that day. Based on what the student needs our student employee would send them to the appropriate advisor. We have utilized work study students and institutional students in our back-end process.

AREAS OF CAUTION

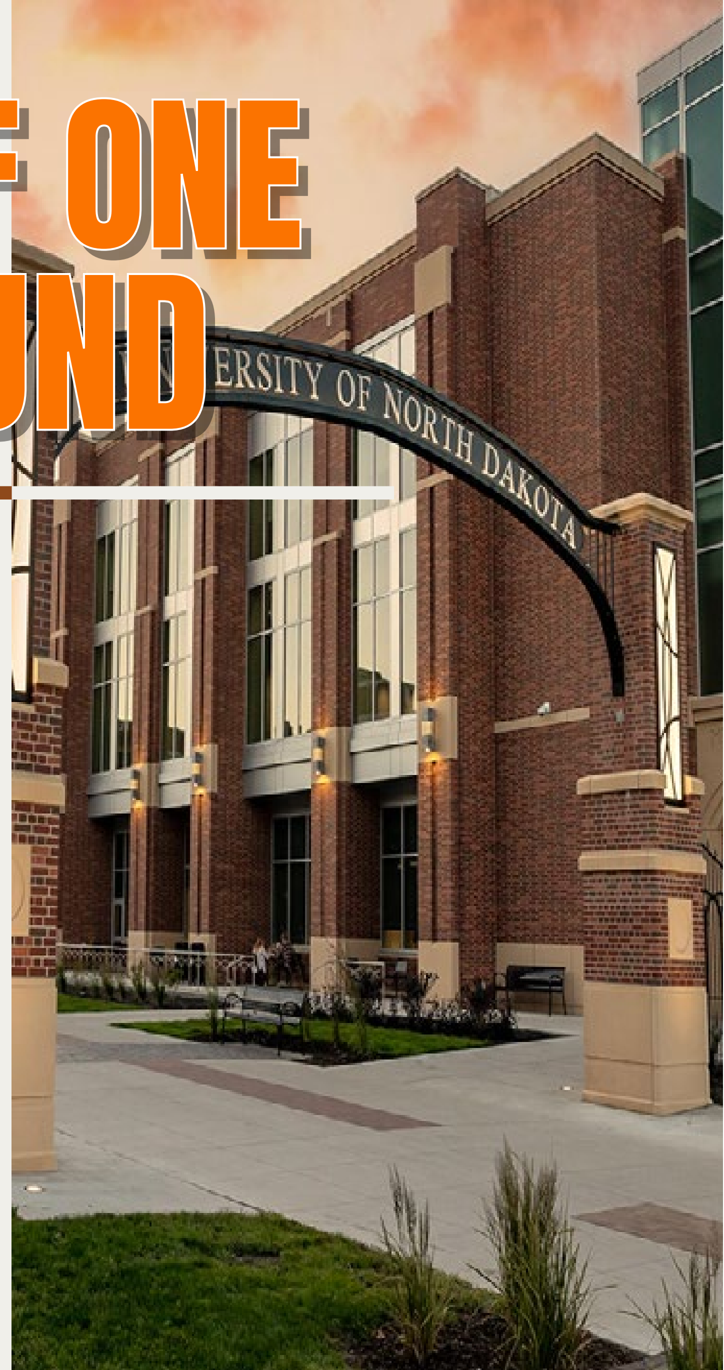
JFOSE: In your experience with the One-Stop model, have there been challenges that you've had to come across that you would want someone who is out there, a college that's out there looking at a One-Stop model, to be aware of when they start up that process?

Margie: One-Stop offices receive questions on anything and everything. It is important to be sure that you have high expectations of your staff. A situation to watch out for is your staff feeling burnt out or overwhelmed. I make it a high priority to take care of our team. When it comes to customer service, ensuring your staff is in a mindset that they can provide that high level service is the highest priority. Having reasonable responsibilities and expectations, and not necessarily expecting perfection but striving for it is how we operate. There are so many pieces for the team to remember and things are always changing, and if they require more assistance from our financial aid team we can help arrange that.



UND CAMPUS AERIAL VIEW

FUTURE OF ONE STOP AT UND



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA CAMPUS ENTRY

JFOSE: What's new on the horizon for you and your team? Are there any specific projects or any new initiatives that you and your team have coming up here over the next year or so?

Margie: Yeah, just a few changes happened in our office setting. These changes have been made to ensure that our One-Stop services are easy to find, and convenient for students' schedules. We're always looking for improved technologies for service and ID cards. Our team will be looking at moving towards what I think maybe several universities have already done, by transitioning to a digital ID card.

JFOSE: On that same note of technology, can I ask a follow up question? What types of systems do you currently use?

Margie: Technology is a key part of having a successful One-Stop. We have shared systems with Financial Aid, Admissions, Registrar's Office, and a few others key offices around campus. For partner to partner and in between departments, we use Microsoft Teams. If we can answer a question quickly on our own, which allows our financial aid office to focus on processing. That's our whole purpose; to be available to the students so the financial aid team can focus on the processing workload. We use a lot of email communication with students, and we use a central email address that our entire staff has access to. We are also monitoring internal systems like Campus Connection, Perceptive Content, Blackboard, and Starfish daily.

JFOSE: How does your team track their notes?

Margie: We utilize Perceptive content to scan and track any emails that our office email is sent.

JFOSE: Okay, thank you. Now you mentioned earlier that you and your team have about 14,000 active students with your campus. Is there more than one location or just the one location where the 14,000 access?

Margie: We have roughly 10,000 students on-campus and around 4,000 students exclusively online. We have a centralized location to serve all students both on-campus and online in our brand-new Memorial Union. Our team is made up of seven full-time people and two part-time people. It's a nice-size team, but we continue to look at our call, foot, and email volume to help ensure we are providing adequate support to our students.

JFOSE: Now on that note, I know prior to us doing this recording, you mentioned that you had a couple testimonials that you wanted to share. Would you like to bring those up at this point?

Margie: I would love to share some student, parent, and staff testimonials. We had a parent compliment the One-Stop team. She said that her and her husband onboard new employees for their own work. She said that the team at One-Stop is doing onboarding for students for life and she wanted to compliment the team for what they do for students. Another testimonial that we received was from a staff member at UND. She said, "I can't say enough positive things about UND's One-Stop team. You are responsive and communicative and helpful. As a higher education practitioner, I often refer to the service

I receive from UND's One-Stop team as a standard I would like my institution to meet.” The final testimonial was from a parent. He's a proud UND parent to a freshman in the aviation program and often in a world where compliments surpass praises. “I would like to take this time to offer my compliments to the entire staff at One-Stop. I have called previously regarding why I was receiving a tuition refund and was explained that scholarships are applied later after the bill initially goes out. The advice offered clearly made sense. Pay the tuition before the due date, but not by the beginning when the bill first comes out. Today I called and I spoke with an advisor regarding a transfer from my 529 son′s flight account. I was explained the money goes first to the financial aid office and then an order is sent to One-Stop to release the funds. Indeed, the money has been received. The knowledge and professionalism of the staff is exceptional. I wish we had something like this when I attended college 35 years ago.” Each of these testimonials are examples of what our office celebrates daily. One-Stop advisors have to prioritize helping others and in my role I love to celebrate any success.

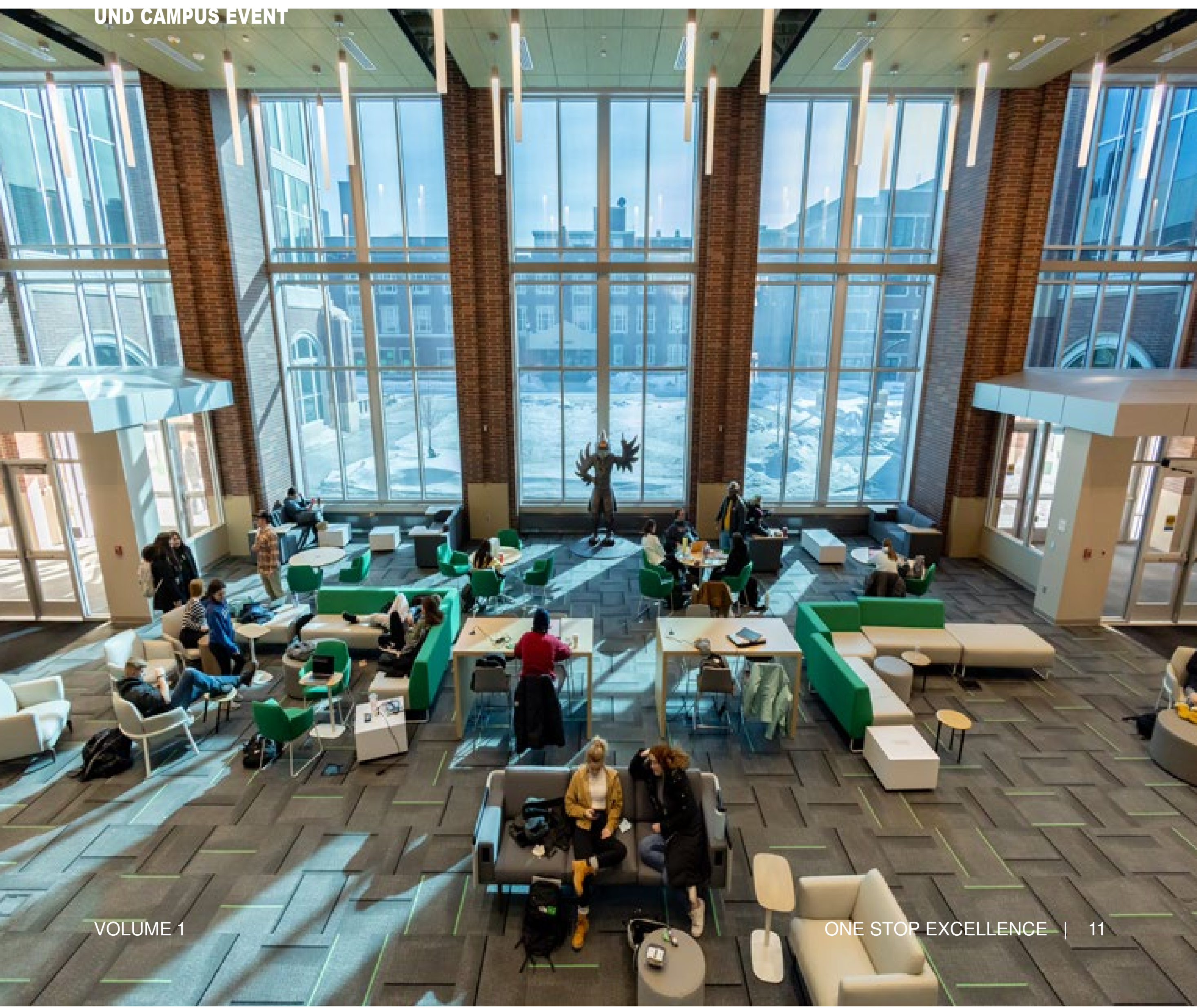
JFOSE: I must agree with that parent. When I started community college, I didn't get that level of support or the direction I needed at the very beginning, which I think delayed my educational process and really made me feel more like a transaction than a student. That's why I'm so passionate about helping the community better understand advancements like the One-Stop model for us to be able to get that. Now, just revisiting something I just noticed. You said you had seven members of your staff. Then, in addition to that, you have 14,000 active students. That means that you have approximately 2,000 students per staff member. Now that's just a staff number. I don't know if that includes any student workers or how your staff ratio is broken up.

Margie: We normally have about five to six student employees that help us and we have them doing all kinds of different things: greeting students, parents, staff, and faculty, making ID cards, processing payments, processing scholarships, and more. Our student employees do an excellent job working on whatever tasks we need them to complete.

JFOSE: That's wonderful. Margie, I want to thank you so very much for taking the time to meet with me today. I really appreciate all the answers and getting to help us know the University of North Dakota better.

Margie: Thank you for giving us the opportunity to tell you about our incredible university. We appreciate it.

UND CAMPUS EVENT

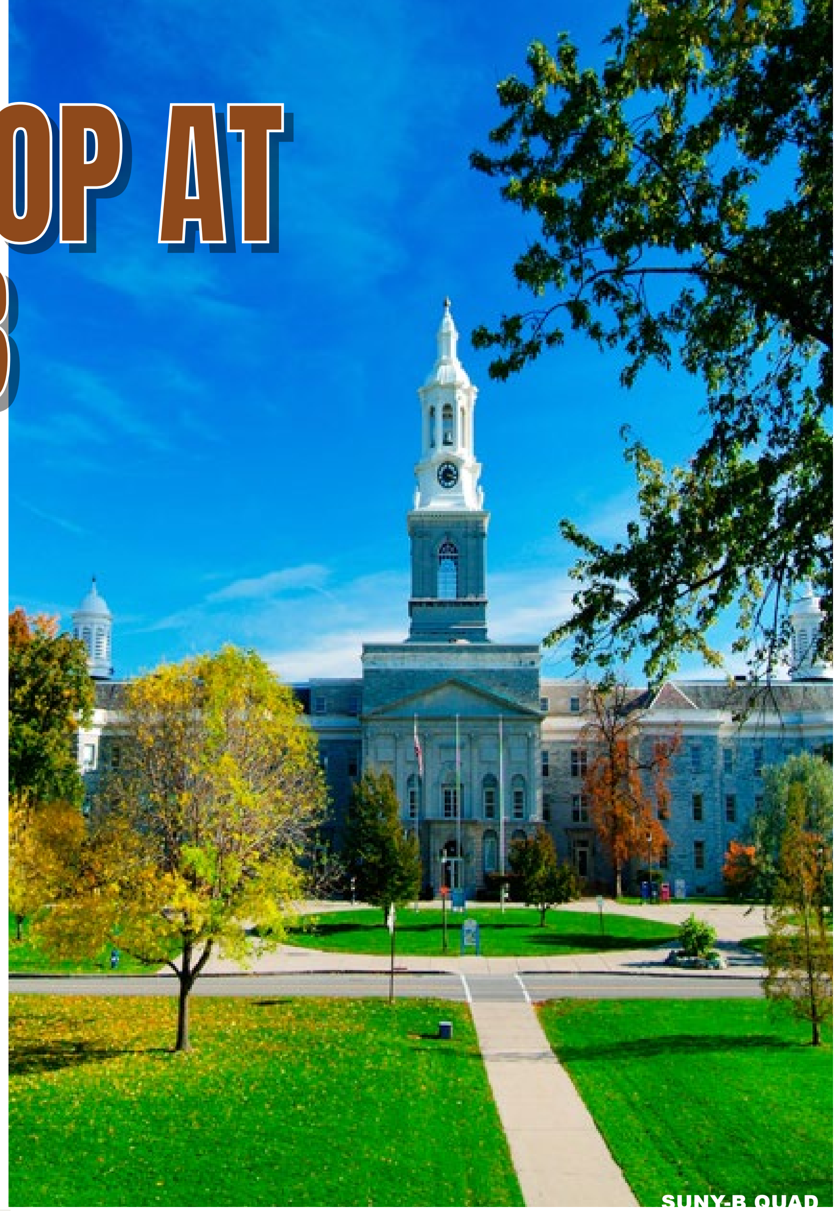


ONE STOP AT SUNY-B

JENNIFER MARKEE

UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS MANAGER OF 1CAPEN



SUNY-B QUAD

I fell into higher education. I didn't mean to do it. I'd stopped out of college a couple of times and I was working at a grocery store chain where I was approached for the store manager in training program. And I had an existential crisis and said, "I can't do this for the rest of my life. Or, more appropriately, I don't want to do this for the rest of my life." I decided to take a civil service exam and started at the University of Buffalo as a Loan Processor. I processed TAP, vocational educational services, and direct loans. While I was there, there was an amazing woman who sat in the office across from my cubicle. Her name was Shirley Walker and she sort of took me under her wing and said, "You deserve better in life. You should really think about going back to school and getting your degree. You work here now so you get educational credits and tuition vouchers. You should think about a career in the field in higher education." I said to myself, "What is that? I don't know what that is." I wasn't a student affairs person. But I listened to her, which was one of the best things I have ever done, and I went back and earned both of my degrees from the University of Buffalo. I received my undergraduate in Psychology. To be honest, I got my undergraduate in Psychology because it would allow me to graduate fastest. Then I earned my graduate degree in Higher Education Administration, and just continued working through the ranks of the university while I was going to school and eventually found myself in this field of Enrollment Management. Again, another field that I had no idea existed originally.

Jennifer Markee
University of New York at Buffalo
One Stop for Student Services

Twenty. I'll have been in higher education twenty years in December. I can hardly believe it. It's interesting to look back on where I was twenty years ago and what was going through my mind at that time. I was taking a pay cut to leave the grocery industry and come into higher ed as a civil service employee. It was a long and tough road, but I'm so glad I did it. It has really changed my life. I tell my student staff all the time to immerse themselves in every possible experience. If I had to do it all over again, I don't think I would have stopped out [of college] as many times as I did. I think I would have tried to stay at home, stay in my parents' house, so that I didn't have to pay for my own housing, auto insurance, and all of that. I think I would have tried to study abroad and have more experiences that going back as an adult learner were sort of difficult to gain.

In New York State, for civil service, you take an exam, and to progress through the different ranks you must take yet another exam. I took the entry level exam, which was at the time called an SG 6 Calculations Clerk. I was hired at the university to do loan processing.

University at Buffalo

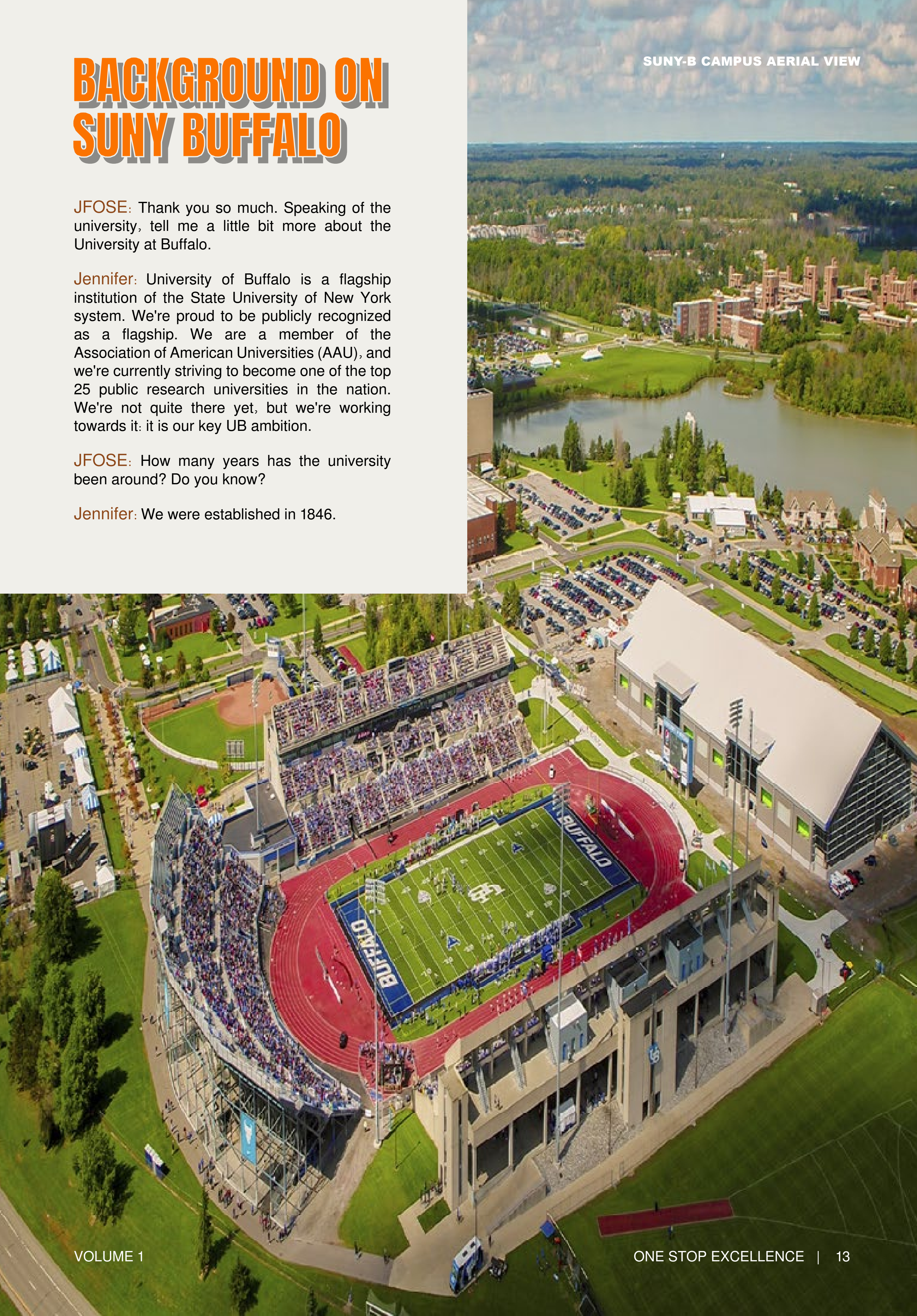
BACKGROUND ON SUNY BUFFALO

JFOSE: Thank you so much. Speaking of the university, tell me a little bit more about the University at Buffalo.

Jennifer: University of Buffalo is a flagship institution of the State University of New York system. We're proud to be publicly recognized as a flagship. We are a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), and we're currently striving to become one of the top 25 public research universities in the nation. We're not quite there yet, but we're working towards it: it is our key UB ambition.

JFOSE: How many years has the university been around? Do you know?

Jennifer: We were established in 1846.



SUNY-B CAMPUS AERIAL VIEW

SUNY BUFFALO'S ONE STOP MODEL

JFOSE: Now you've been there for 20 years. How have you seen enrollment management change over that time?

Jennifer: When I first started at the university, we did not have an Enrollment Manager. We've only had an Enrollment Manager for exactly ten years now. I think part of what I've really seen is that, at the university, it was a proverbial free for all. Admissions handled most of the undergrad processing, but there were a lot of hands in the pot. We have thirteen schools and colleges at the university and one Undergraduate Admissions Office. Additionally all the schools and colleges who have graduate programs have their own admissions officers. It gets a little difficult at times to ensure that we're all following the same best practices. Then of course we're a division one athletic school. There is a focus on the rigor of our programs and the skill sets that our athletes are coming in with. We've had great progress, especially in the last ten years, of improving our relationship with all the decanal units across the campus as well as athletics. All of that I would humbly attribute to our amazing Enrollment Manager here, Lee Melvin; he's a nationally respected leader in the field.

JFOSE: With the college I was previously a part of, I had sixty-six members of my One-Stop team and we managed five key disciplines from a customer service perspective. There was Financial Aid, Military and VA, Bursar, Office of the Registrar, and Admissions. What type of disciplines does your team manage or work with?

Jennifer: In our One-Stop, 1Capen, currently we serve as the in-person presence for Financial Aid and Veterans Benefits, Student Accounts, Records and Registration, Student Health Insurance—both undergraduate and graduate, Parking and Transportation, and UB Card Office, which is our card service. The UB card can be used for meal plans, for access to dorms or different buildings, as well as identity. We have a satellite location that just opened in spring of 2022. It's on our South Campus, and at that location it's a little bit different makeup. We have representation from Student Accounts, Financial Aid, Records and Registration, Accessibility Testing, and this year we will be adding Undergraduate Admissions and Career Services to that portfolio.

JFOSE: Are there separate One-Stops over there?

Jennifer: We do have a separate One-Stop on South Campus that we call 1Diefendorf. It is considerably smaller. Our undergraduate population on our South Campus is not as robust as it is on our North Campus. Our South Campus primarily houses our professional schools. However, this Fall we have 1,000 undergraduate first year students moving into the dorms on South Campus. We are trying to build up our presence on South, at 1Diefendorf.

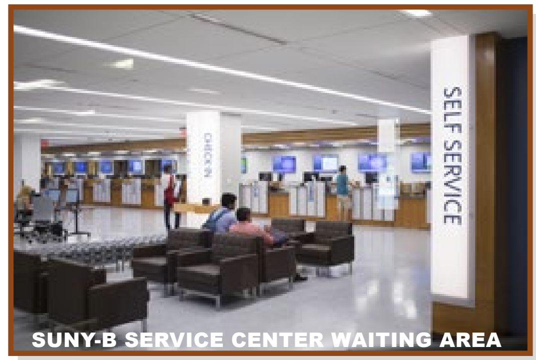
JFOSE: Does the South Campus facilitate all the programs that are offered at the North Campus?

Jennifer: There is a lot of travel involved. Most undergraduate programs are on the North Campus. We do have shuttle buses that run between the two campuses. They're about an eight-minute drive. Every school or college has its primary location and most of those on South Campus are the professional schools, such as Architecture, Nursing, and Dental Medicine.

SUNY-B CAMPUS AERIAL VIEW AT NIGHT

JFOSE: Let's go back to where the University of Buffalo started its One-Stop program. I imagine that has not always been present since the beginning of SUNY Buffalo since One-Stop is a relatively new concept. Can you tell me when SUNY Buffalo started its One-Stop model and some of the benefits that you considered when implementing that kind of a model?

Jennifer: We opened our first official One-Stop in 2001. That was just Financial Aid, Student Accounts, Records and Registration, and Veterans Benefits. Generalist staff members were cross-trained in those areas. We opened our current One-Stop model in 2017. That's when we brought in Card Services and Health Insurance. In our first iteration, we included International Student Services and some Advising, which we eventually phased out because they didn't fit as well in our model. I can't speak to 2001 because that was before I started here, but in 2017 we realized that we wanted to create what we call the heart of the campus. If you needed to get your parking permit at the start of the semester, you would have to go over to our Ellicott Complex, which is across the street from our main campus. Then to get your UB card, you'd have to come back over to the academic spine, but it would be at the student union, which is four buildings down. Then if you wanted Financial Aid and Student Accounts, you'd be in Capen. So, students would be back and forth all over the campus and a lot of the time those services were not only things that you needed at the same time as you arrive on campus, but we're also interdependent on each other. You might have had a charge on your bill for your meal plan that is in dispute. If you started at Student Accounts (in Capen) to discuss your bill, they would have to send you to UB Card (in Student Union) to have the meal plan charge removed, and perhaps you would then need to go back to Student Accounts to ensure your bill was accurate. We saw a need to bring everybody together under one roof. One of the challenges that we faced was that as a state institution, we are a unionized environment with multiple collective bargaining units. We couldn't do a full cross training. We continue to cross-train in financial aid, student accounts, and records and registration. They make up our first five counters of our twelve front facing counters in the center. Then we have two counters for Parking, one counter for Health Insurance, and three more counters for the UB Card Office. They each have their own specialists at those counters. While it's not One-Stop in the respect that you come in and only one person is going to take care of you from start to finish, It is One-Stop in that you don't have to leave the center. If the Student Account's person has a question about your meal plan, they can walk you down to that counter, the three of you can have that conversation, and by the time you leave your issue is resolved more often than not.



SUNY-B SERVICE CENTER WAITING AREA

SUNY-B SERVICE CENTER LOBBY


SUNY-B CAMPUS SERVICE CENTER

SUNY-B CAMPUS AERIAL VIEW


AREAS OF CAUTION

JFOSE: Based on your experience now, let me ask you this. If a new college is considering a One-Stop model, what areas of caution would you advise them?

Jennifer: With state schools, things might be a little bit different because of our unions and SUNY system umbrella. I would start by saying be cautious with how many things you're bringing in and expecting one person to understand. As much as I would love to see my entire center completely cross trained and be able to answer every question for every student, I don't know how valid that really is and how practical that really is to ask staff members to be able to make a UB card and comment about health insurance—which is a complex market—while checking your student account and offering you financial aid. That's a lot to ask of one individual. So, I would caution in that mindset that everybody must be cross trained because I think we're a perfect example that we're doing this One-Stop model, but we're not following that cross-train mindset and it's working well for us.

JFOSE: I want to ask you about the staffing levels. With my previous institution I had sixty-six members of the One-Stop team, but I had no student staff. Do you rely on student staff to assist your student population?

Jennifer: Currently, we only rely on student staff at our concierge desk. At our concierge desk we have one full-time staff member and as many Federal Work Study (FWS) students as we can capitalize on. Due in part to the pandemic and a number of offices not having work-study opportunities available anymore, we have been able to increase the number of FWS students we hire. I love being able to offer work study jobs to students as they walk in and say, "please help me find a job." It's a great feeling. So, we utilize students at the desk, and they help students get checked in for the service that they're looking for. A lot of the time that is a triage effort where a student comes in and are not sure who they need to talk to, they just know they have an issue. So, our student staff will dig a little bit deeper to make sure they get students to the right person. Our student staff also do a lot of way finding. We are located in the main administrative building on the campus. We're on the ground floor, so, our students will help people to get across campus and, when we have enough staffing, they will physically take people to the location that they're looking for. They'll also assist students at our self-help kiosk area where we have five computers connected to our website. If the student comes in and they need to print out a document, or they need to sign up for their parking permit, or they need to complete their FERPA, they can do all of that right there and our student staff will walk them through that. They're a great resource. A lot of times I'll be at the desk with them, and when a student asks a question, they'll know things that I'd never even heard of because they're immersed in it themselves. Currently, we're not utilizing them at our tier one and tier two service levels, but I have been thinking very recently about maybe hiring a graduate assistant or two in the center to expand our services.

JFOSE: I want to circle back to two questions based on some things that you mentioned earlier. One, you made mention about how one-stop takes on a lot of information. I recognized with my previous One-Stop team an 80/20 split where I wanted my members of my One-Stop team to have about 80% of the total knowledge I wanted them to be proficient in key disciplines, but I didn't want them to be experts because I feel that puts too much on them to memorize everything. For example, with financial aid, I don't need to have them know all the intricacies of processing. I just need them to understand what's going through the processing stage, and how to track that. I would prefer to have them invest more time in customer service than to investigate areas they wouldn't have to access on a regular basis. Do you agree with something like that, or do you take a different viewpoint on that?

Jennifer: I'm the Strategic Operations Manager for 1Capen [SUNY Buffalo's One-Stop] and I'm not the Director. Each stakeholder office has their own director. My job is essentially customer service and the technology of the center: making sure everything is running smoothly. In each separate area it's a little bit different. For example, the entire Student Health Insurance Office—whether that's back-end processing or front-end student support—consists of three people. All three are in the center and they do everything. Whereas my three cross-trained staff members are cross trained in Financial Aid, Student Accounts, and Registrar's Office. They are generalists and not involved in the processing, although at times they will step in to assist with that. They also assist by answering incoming email for the stakeholder offices. Additionally, I have professional advisors from the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Financial Aid onsite and they also work phones, emails and processing for those offices.. So those people who are always on site and available in the center have a very strong mix of every role that their office puts forward. So to answer your question, I think have far fewer staff with an 80/20 split and more subject matter experts on hand.

JFOSE: The second part I want to follow up on is the types of technology that you use. With my previous team we had about five or six different systems we used: everything from Banner, which was our system of record, to a separate financial aid system, to a separate system for notes and the CRM. Which type of systems do you utilize at your location?

Jennifer: The university in general is a PeopleSoft school. We have our HUB for the university. That is our student center, and our staff use that for case management. Our advising offices, which are not in the one-stop, use a separate system (Navigate) for case management. Then in the center, we also use WaitWell, which is our queuing or line-management solution. We previously used another solution, but we just implemented WaitWell and we're thrilled with the product. If a department has any proprietary software then they're in that as well. But those 2 are primary, our PeopleSoft (HUB) and our WaitWell queuing system.

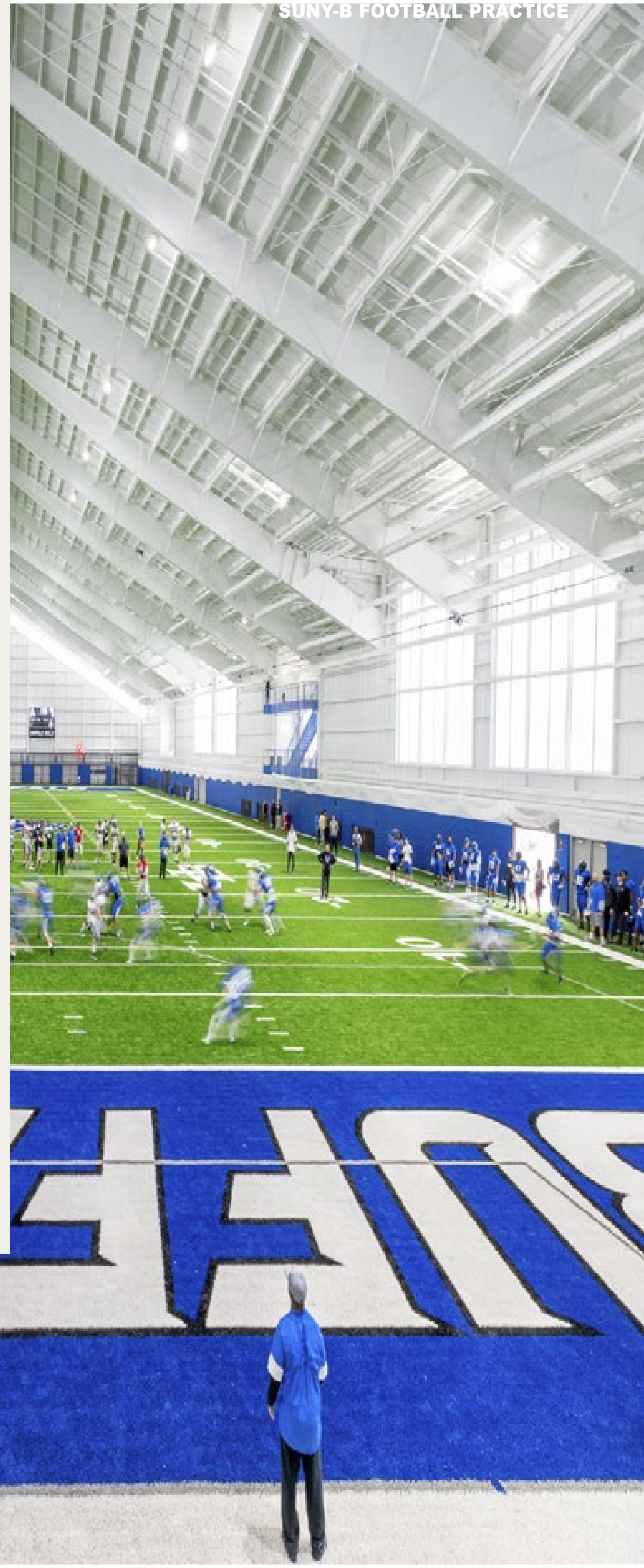
JFOSE: Excellent. Approximately how many active students would you say that you have this upcoming semester?

Jennifer: At the university we have approximately 19,000 undergrad and 11,000 graduate students across our three campuses, which is our North Campus (our primary campus where the center is located), our South Campus, and then our Downtown Medical Campus. Last year, so for the 2022-2023 academic year keeping that general number of 30,000 students in mind, we served over 50,000 cases in our One-Stop on the North Campus alone.

JFOSE: What would you say is the total student to staff ratio?

Jennifer: That's tough because while we're talking about the entire One-Stop team, we are essentially split up into our own silos within the One-Stop. For Financial Aid and Veterans Benefits we served just over 16,000 cases in the 2022-2023 academic year, which is 32% of the cases that came through the center. For that we have four generalists and seven specialists. That's our highest percentage. Our next highest percentage would be our UB Card Office that served almost 15,000 cases, which is 29% of our overall and we have anywhere from three to four staff members in that office. So, it's hard to give you an exact ratio as it varies by service.

SUNY-B FOOTBALL PRACTICE



FUTURE OF ONE STOP AT SUNY-B

SUNY-B MASCOT

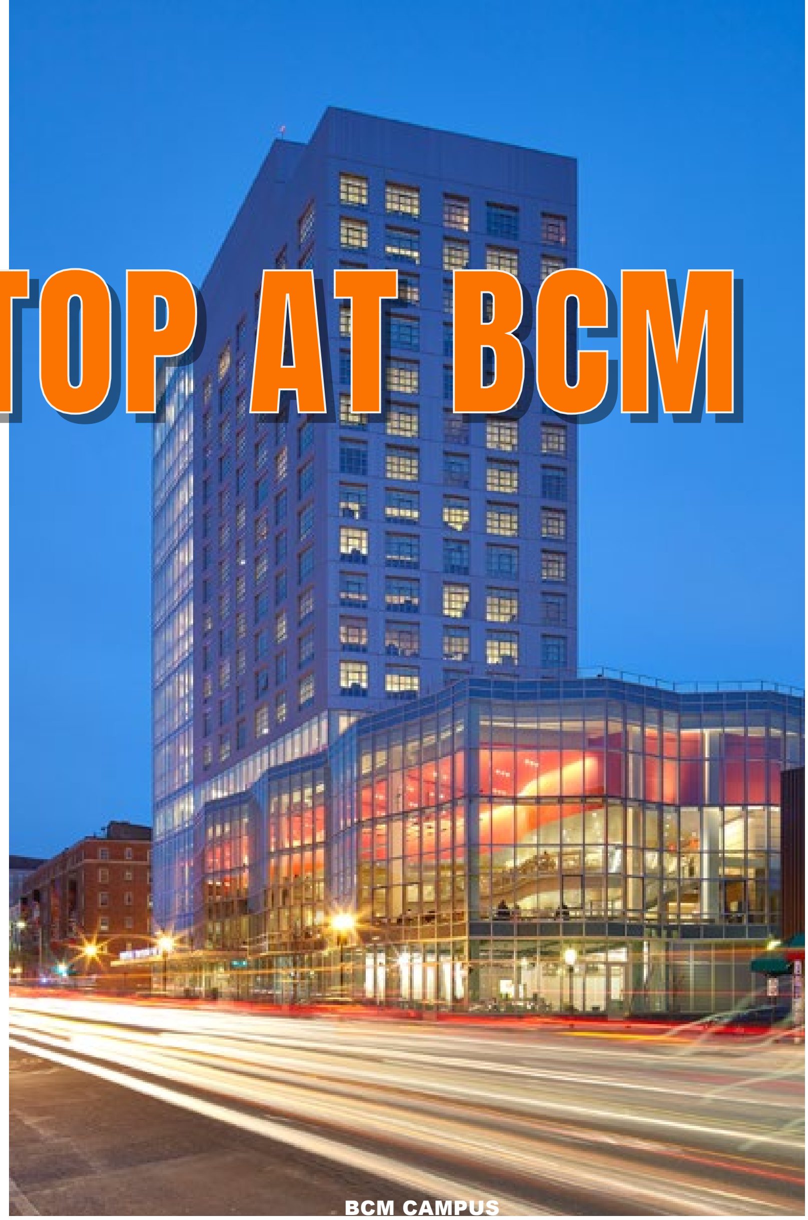
JFOSE: What kind of new projects or interesting innovations do you have coming up over the next year or two?

Jennifer: We're excited to have just implemented WaitWell. We've been at it for about a month now and my staff has finally started to feel comfortable with the system, which is good because we're about to go into our peak time of the year. New this year with WaitWell—something we've never done before—we will be utilizing remote join where a student can join the line remotely. Historically, the first day of classes and the first week of classes, for our UB card service alone, we have had up to a four hour wait. The line has just been wrapped around the building and we actually set aside a separate room just for UB card. Usually, it has stanchions in it and people are lined up in and beyond that room. This year we're going to put up one hundred chairs in the room where people can sit in. We're going to have a QR code so they can come by and if there's too many people waiting, students can just snap the QR code and join the line remotely, then walk away, go down to the student union, go have lunch, do whatever it is that they need to do, and they'll be alerted via text message when it's time to come back and where to go once they do come back. That's huge for us. We're very excited. I know a lot of people were able to implement that during the pandemic, but it was not something we were able to do with the technology that we were using at the time. This has been a long time coming, about two years. Another thing we're looking forward to is that right now the university is working with SUNY on a grant. I'm not involved in it so I'm not familiar with how this is shaping up, but we're hoping to implement a transfer center across the hall from 1Capen. That will be exciting for our students. The transfer advising team works out of the 1Capen back offices, however they're not student facing in our area. They leave 1Capen and go over to the admissions office to serve students when somebody comes on campus. They've always wanted to have a similar setup to ours, and now there is a collaborative effort to try to create that. We are eager to see where SUNY will take that and how it will shake out.

JFOSE: I'm excited to hear about all the accomplishments once those go through. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.

ONE STOP AT BCM

KEVIN FIGUEIREDO
BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC
ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES


BCM CAMPUS

I'm the Director of One Stop Student Services at Berklee College of Music. My background is in music; I've been a musician my entire life. I've played in a lot of different bands from metal to EDM (electronic dance music), and that ultimately led me to a career in music retail at Guitar Center where I worked for eleven years. I worked my way up to store manager and then in 2016 I had the opportunity to join Berklee Online as an Academic Advisor. I jumped at the chance to get into higher ed, especially working with musicians. The advising model at Berklee Online is unique, as they work with the same assigned students from application to graduation. So, a student would apply, and I would be their recruiter, helping them navigate the application process. Once they became a student, I would help them enroll for their first classes then help them navigate aid and billing. I would be with them all the way to when they completed their program doing regular check-ins, degree advising, making sure they're on track with submitting assignments, making sure the graduation application is submitted on time, you name it! It was a great opportunity to learn the entire student-life cycle, which really has informed my work here in the One-Stop. During my time at Berklee Online I became acutely aware of how critical aid was in the process of the student enrolling, so I learned as much as I could about federal student aid just to be better able to help my students. Then in 2019, when an opportunity opened in Student Financial Services on our main campus, I was fortunate to become the Director of Student Aid Services. In that role I oversaw a frontline team of Student Aid Service Professionals: all full-time staff that provided federal financial aid and scholarship services. We previously had separate aid and scholarship offices, and were able to develop a flat model team with the philosophy that any staff member can assist any student with any question. Then the pandemic hit. It was very disruptive, but we learned so much about how to become an efficient service operation: redesigning our website, creating better communication tools, making sure our students had as much information as possible to navigate those uncertain times. Soon after we returned to the office after the pandemic I was asked to help research, design, and ultimately implement and run the One Stop. That is where we are today.

Kevin Figueiredo
Berklee College of Music
Director of One-Stop Student Services

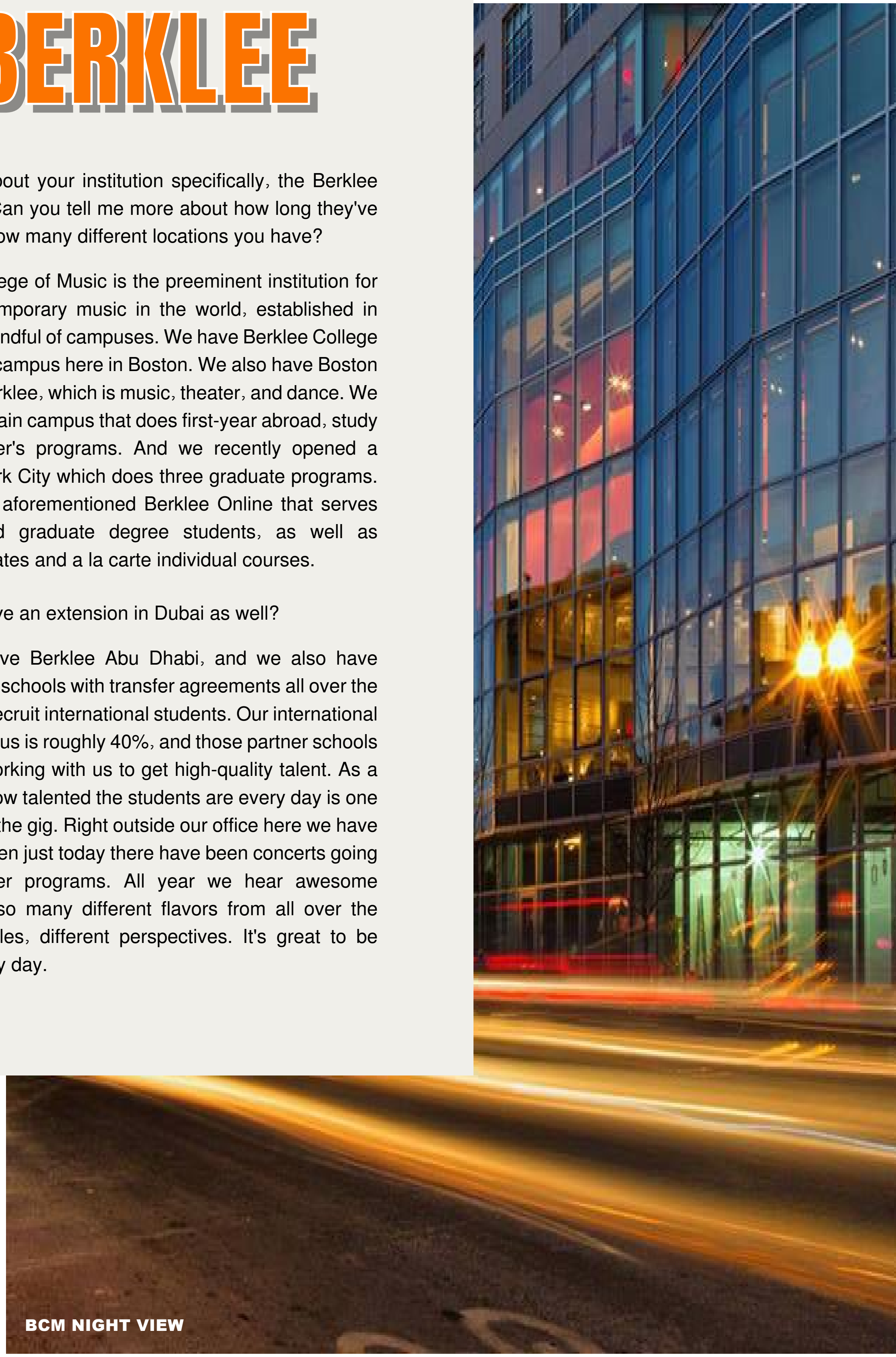
BACKGROUND ON BERKLEE

JFOSE: Tell me about your institution specifically, the Berklee College of Music. Can you tell me more about how long they've been around and how many different locations you have?

Kevin: Berklee College of Music is the preeminent institution for the study of contemporary music in the world, established in 1945. We have a handful of campuses. We have Berklee College of Music, the main campus here in Boston. We also have Boston Conservatory at Berklee, which is music, theater, and dance. We have a Valencia Spain campus that does first-year abroad, study abroad, and master's programs. And we recently opened a campus in New York City which does three graduate programs. Then we have the aforementioned Berklee Online that serves undergraduate and graduate degree students, as well as non-degree certificates and a la carte individual courses.

JFOSE: Do you have an extension in Dubai as well?

Kevin: Yes, we have Berklee Abu Dhabi, and we also have various partnership schools with transfer agreements all over the world that help us recruit international students. Our international population on campus is roughly 40%, and those partner schools are awesome at working with us to get high-quality talent. As a musician, seeing how talented the students are every day is one of the best parts of the gig. Right outside our office here we have a recital hall and even just today there have been concerts going on for our summer programs. All year we hear awesome concerts. We get so many different flavors from all over the world, different styles, different perspectives. It's great to be immersed in it every day.



BCM NIGHT VIEW

WHY BCM IMPLEMENTED ONE STOP

JFOSE: What an absolute treat that must be. Let's go back before the beginning of this year. You're coming out of the pandemic, and you are considering starting the One-Stop. What sparked that conversation and why was it that you guys decided to move in that direction?

Kevin: I think like most institutions we had amazing individual service teams helping students in a siloed fashion. Like my Student Aid Services Team—excellent team—in scholarships and federal aid, but once the conversation veered into needing to set up a payment plan or needing a prerequisite waiver for a course, then we had to get the student to somebody else. Likewise with our Student Accounts Office and Registrar's Office, amazing teams that did great work, but it was still siloed. That resulted in a bounce, which everyone is familiar with: the bounce or the run around or whatever you want to call it for the institution. Students must deal with that, and it can be frustrating. One of the guiding philosophies we built into the One-Stop was that students don't have silo'd problems. They don't think "I have a Student Accounts problem. I have a Student Financial Services problem." It's "I can't register for this class, or I can't check in or I can't pay my bill." Then you must figure out why. In the process of figuring that out, you can say, let me go to the Aid Office. Okay, well you're not registered for enough classes to be eligible for aid so you must go to the Registrar's Office, get the prerequisite waiver so you can get the six-credit minimum. So I'm there, but now my bill is not updated. So let me go to the Billing Office. Okay, your bill's updated, but your aid hasn't been posted. Let me go back to Aid. You do that runaround with a few thousand students and it becomes difficult to be efficient. Again, everyone did excellent work, and we created a lot of different ways to work behind the scenes to make that as easy as possible, but in doing so, the students know they're still being bounced. So, the main purpose of creating the One-Stop was to unify these areas and create a more seamless student experience. I've been talking about those three areas because that's what most One-Stops are and thus really where the bounce mostly comes from. As one of my colleagues put it, aid and billing are each a side of the same coin. Then registration is what you spend the coin on. Creating a one-stop with those three primary areas just made a lot of sense and it's been very successful for us so far.

JFOSE: What are your thoughts on the benefits of a One-Stop coming into this process? Did you speak with any other One-Stops that were out there or had you heard of other benefits that go along with this process?

Kevin: One of the first things we did was to decide to make a unified service team out of the existing frontline teams. Then we had to decide on the service model we wanted to implement. When we did that, we did a lot of research. That's something I would recommend to any school looking at implementing a One-Stop, join ISSP [Institute for Student Services Professionals]. If they're reading the journal, I'm sure they're already a part of it. That was a huge tool for us in the beginning stages, just asking questions like what your org structure is like or how do you handle surveys? The ISSP is super helpful. We also had a bunch of local schools that had One-Stops that we reached out to, and we had meetings with them and talked to them about what worked for them, what didn't work for them. That's how we arrived at the flat organizational model we wanted to implement. Our model is predicated upon the philosophy that any staff member can assist any student with nearly any question. Where we previously had silos, even knowledge silos, we wanted the aid folks to have the same knowledge of registration and billing that the service teams from those offices had and vice versa. We have ten Assistant Directors—full time staff—that are our primary intake for phone, email, and in-person walk-ins. We don't require any appointments. We always have staff available Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm for student walk ins. Staff rotate in and out to cover the front and then when they are not at the front, they answer phones and emails. We have a single email address and a single phone number where students can get in contact with us, and we've also taken the existing phone numbers and emails from the home offices that we combined, and we just forwarded them all into the same funnel. That way, even if a student happens to email the "wrong" email address, they still get to the right place. That's been very successful and is the critical component to us operating in a round robin model. We have equal distribution of emails and phone calls, and we also have an equal distribution of knowledge. Staff can get a registration question, then a billing question, and an aid question, and that really helps to reinforce the idea that "I can help you with this no matter what it is." That's really the point of creating the One-Stop, to have a single point of contact and a single point of resolution. Additionally, Our One-Stop consists of two separate teams. We have a One-Stop Student Services Team, representing aid, billing and registration, and then we have an Admission Services Team who support the college's recruitment efforts. The benefit there is that under this unified leadership, the admissions team, if they get a question about aid or billing, they can be cross trained to help a little, even though they have separate communication channels, further reducing the bounce. This is especially helpful when the recruitment and aid calendars intertwine. Something else I want to mention, and that I'm really proud of, is how quickly we were able to do this. We started researching and designing in January of 2022, and then on May 31 we were in our space. Not fully functioning as a true One Stop, but operating within our space. August 1st was our official launch last year. In fact, a little story, the very first day we moved into this new space as the One-Stop we had a student come in who literally had a registration issue, an aid issue, and a billing issue on the last day of that drop. You know the story, 4:59 PM, the student is trying to get in for the semester and they need everything to go right: registration issues, aid issues, billing issues. Even though the staff wasn't fully trained yet, we had staff there from those offices who were able to take care of the problem all right there. Whereas previously the student would have to walk to different places even in the same building. He just was like, "Wow!, you guys can do this right here right now?" "Yep, you're in for the semester." We were able to resolve it. We couldn't have scripted it any better. Certainly, there's been growing pains and there's been a lot of things we've learned along the way, but it was awesome to see that initial result and to help that student who had the deck stacked against them from an enrollment perspective go from being unsure if they can enroll to ready to start classes the next day.

AREAS OF CAUTION

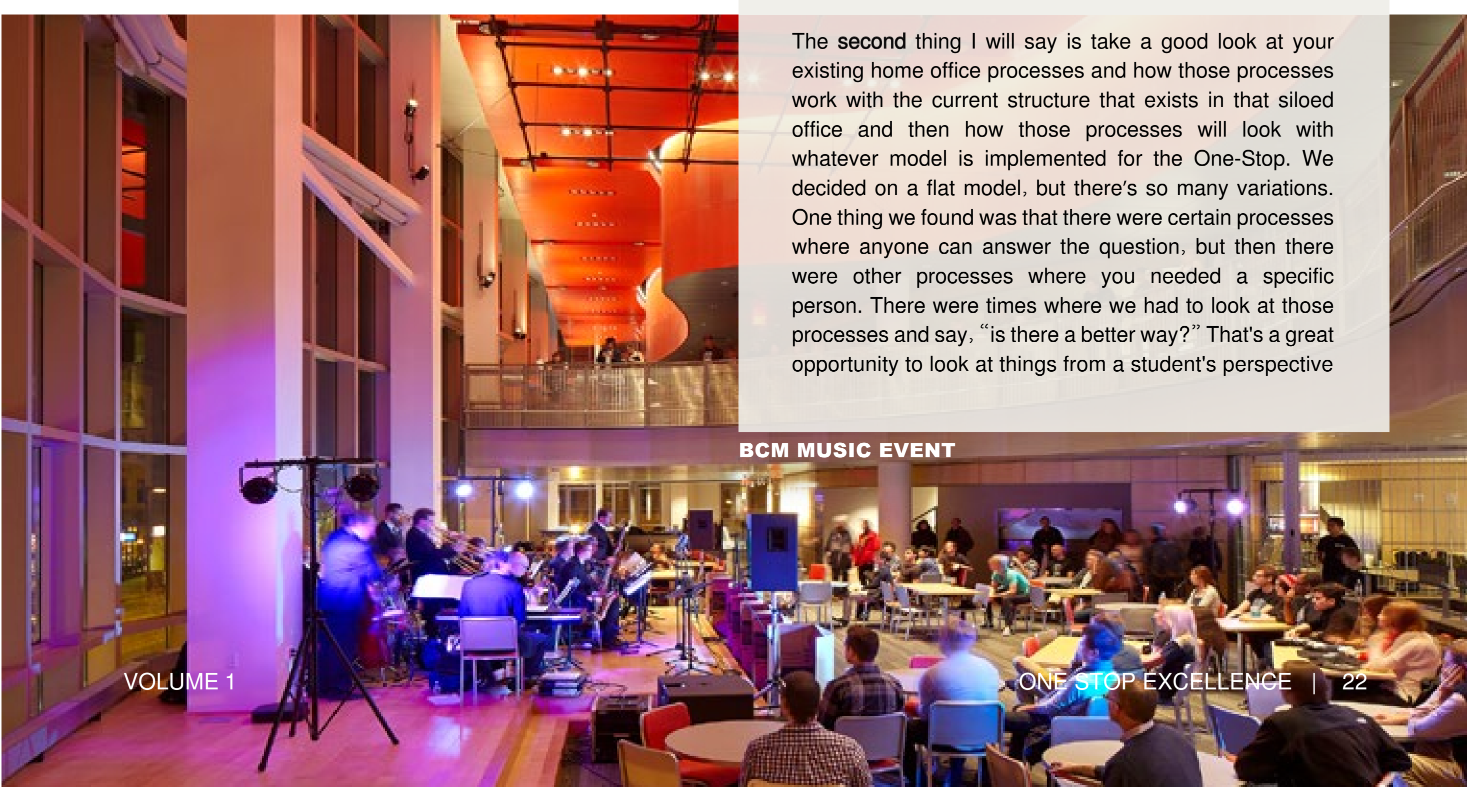
JFOSE: Let's talk about some of those growing pains. When we talk about One-Stops, there are a lot of advantages. What are some of the challenges that you've seen as you've started to structure this out?

Kevin: I'm going to try to frame these challenges as opportunities in creating the One-Stop. I think there are **three main things** that are most important. if you proactively address these items, it'll make things a lot easier in your implementation.

The **first** is home office relationships. While each one stop is different, most consist at least Registrar, Aid, and Billing services. Sometimes they have Admissions, ID cards, etc. I think home office relationships are probably the most important thing when you're starting out, especially being the Director or the leader of the One-Stop with the leadership from those home offices. There needs to be a tight relationship and a common path forward and a mutual understanding of the goals of both the One-Stop and that home office. In our model, we are the student service representation of these offices. That relationship is critical between the One-Stop Director and the leadership [partner teams and college administration]. It all starts with the student-first philosophy. The One-Stop team is working with that student and in a unified approach. The home offices that you represent must be equally aligned with that philosophy. It's critical to have that student first alignment.

BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

The **second** thing I will say is take a good look at your existing home office processes and how those processes work with the current structure that exists in that siloed office and then how those processes will look with whatever model is implemented for the One-Stop. We decided on a flat model, but there's so many variations. One thing we found was that there were certain processes where anyone can answer the question, but then there were other processes where you needed a specific person. There were times where we had to look at those processes and say, "is there a better way?" That's a great opportunity to look at things from a student's perspective


BCM MUSIC EVENT

BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC WALKWAY

and ask "what is easiest" for them. What's the best thing for the student? As an addendum to processes, if you can do automation, do it. As much automation as you can have, the better. We utilize Salesforce as our CRM. We utilize a form process with Salesforce for a lot of forms that we have which make things a lot easier for processing. To the student, it's a form, they submit it, and then on the back end the routing is easier. The form gets to where it needs to go, we can collect data easier. Processes are big, and I find that's where students have the most challenges navigating higher ed administration. "What do I have to do when and why?" Making sure that your One-Stop doesn't mold to the existing process, but mold the process to the One-Stop, because the One-Stop is the one supporting the students.

The last thing is training for the One-Stop team, for yourself, for the home offices. Even beyond that, training for the campus, for the other constituencies like faculty, for other staff that are not part of enrollment. Training and communication are key to the implementation. With staff training, one thing we did that was very helpful was during that lead time we had, we implemented a daily cross training schedule. We would have staff from Aid go and spend a few hours with the Registrar folks and watch them do their job and help them do their job as it was currently constituted. We wanted them to see exactly what each staff member was doing and to explain why. We did that for several months and that provided a couple benefits. One is it creates a better sense of team because everyone gets one on one time with each other. It also allowed them to cross train each other and get deep into their individual work, which paid dividends down the road.

Maybe we can add a bonus item to focus on. The One Stop team itself. The team is the most important asset you have in the One-Stop—above the process, above the philosophy, above the systems. The folks working with your students are the most important thing, so making sure that they have the tools to do their job, they have the knowledge to do their job well, and they have the support to serve our students. Honestly, of all of the success we have had thus far, the team we developed is what I am 100% most proud of. They are truly amazing.

Going back to your question about caution, the beginning of implementing a One-Stop is hard. There are growing pains. However, stay true to the vision and don't give up! There are going to be challenges you must overcome but stay the course. It's worth it. We did a very fast implementation—within a few months—and we went through growing pains last fall. After fall, we learned so much that we were able to quickly pivot and change several things. Going into our spring semester this past January, we had a much smoother time. Now going into this fall with even more changes, we're feeling great about our team and processes. We have an awesome team in place. They're much better trained. The home office relationships have never been better. We've identified where our processes were inefficient and we've created better processes. We're not fully there yet. I want to be clear. We are still very young. We're essential a year into the official implementation, but we feel great about where we are now. Going through those growing pains, while painful and scary at times, was worth it because the knowledge that we gained was invaluable.

JFOSE: There are a couple of other questions that came up from your response. Number one was the issue of siloing. I know personally and I've heard from other leaders that siloing can be a very challenging situation, especially when you've had processes in place for a long time. Some locations have gone to a more formal structure where they have a letter of agreement with those individual offices on what they do and what they don't do. For myself, I looked at it from what's called the Pareto Principle where it was an 80-20 split of what we should and should not be knowledgeable about. An example might be that my expectation is for the team I'm working with to be at a certain proficiency level and some of the other departments might expect that we are all experts in these fields, but that's not the case. For example, if the One-Stop is talking to a student about financial aid, we're answering their most common questions and if we get something that's a little quirky that we're not familiar with, we will go back to our experts in the financial aid department to get the answers. Unfortunately, sometimes there's a miscommunication about what One-Stop does versus what they do not do. My question to you is, "have you had to revisit those conversations? Is there still siloing that pops up from time to time?"

Kevin: I'm glad you mentioned the service agreements with the home offices because that is something we constantly revisit. Identifying what the One-Stop is responsible for and then what the home offices do, and then what's the process behind those things. The way I've always framed it is that if we're not going to do the process, we need to have visibility into the process. Students will call us to ask, “where am I in this? I submitted this thing. I want to know where I'm at.” When you get visibility, we need to have knowledge of it, which is why, going back to my point about the challenges and things to look out for, having that great relationship with the home office makes things a lot easier. The home office is still operating in a siloed fashion because you do have the aid experts, the registrar experts, the billing and finance experts that you still will need to refer to. You need to have a solid relationship. Yes, there are things that come up where we must ask, “are you sure the one-stop should be doing that or shouldn't be doing that?” Then we have a conversation about it, and because the relationships that we've been able to develop are so good, we can have productive discussions about it and we can create a document that says, “here's the things that we will do, and this is how you can get information on it. These are the things you will do, and this is how we can follow up with you on this.” So, when you both agree, it makes it so much easier. It's usually easier with the home office that you represented first. In my case it was Aid. Then we only had to really work on Billing and then Registrar when we started. We also collaborate a lot on new processes if something's going to change. So say the Registrar changes the way that a certain process is done. We discuss any downstream effects that could impact how we talk to students about aid or billing before we implement the change. As a One-Stop Director that is one of the most challenging, but also one of the most exciting things about the role. You get to look at the whole picture and you get to put these puzzle pieces together, and it's immensely satisfying when you coordinate these different pieces to create a much more seamless student experience.


BCM DORM BUILDING

BENEFITS OF THE ONE STOP MODEL AT BCM

JFOSE: A second follow up question about training. In my experience, we implemented a model where we would do an annual assessment. With our One-Stop Team members that was meant for two specific reasons. One, it was meant to be an avenue by which they can demonstrate proficiency and then move to a next level: from a One-Stop Level One to a One-Stop Level Two. That made it a really great opportunity. Second, it was a way of us revisiting the key components of what were the most important things for the members of the One-Stop team to have. Over the course of that year, my question to you would be “do you have a plan to have an assessment or is that not within your current structure, or do you have something different in mind?”

Kevin: It's ongoing and daily. We're constantly looking at what we need training on because there's things that come up during the year that may not have come up in the previous year. When we realize we don't know something or if there’s a flood of certain questions, we know we need to train. We have a rapid response kind of model where we engage with our home offices, as I mentioned previously. Our Registrar will come in and say, “This is what we have going on now. These are some important changes we're implementing, and this is why.” Then they will train us on these things. We have aid training where we train the staff on aid matters. With the 2024-2025 changes coming up, that's going to be probably the biggest thing. I know we're going to talk about that down the road, but I think related to the down the road stuff, the ’24-’25 FAFSA change is probably the biggest. This really goes back to those Home Office relationships when it comes to staff training. You need to be able to go to your home office and say, “Our team is getting a ton of questions about this thing that we're transferring to you all to resolve. However, we feel that we should be able to do this. Can we negotiate access and you can come do training so that we can better help our students?” Things work the other way too where we're doing something that really doesn't fit within the One-Stop that we inherited so we might ask “can we transfer it back to you and we do the training the other way.” It's ongoing based on individual feedback, based on what our students are asking us and what they need from us. If we're not able to answer questions and we're having to constantly transfer, then we need to address that with training with the home offices for sure.

EVENT AT BCM

THE FUTURE OF ONE STOP AT BCM

JFOSE: What's next on the horizon for your One-Stop team and you?

Kevin: '24-'25 FAFSA is on everyone's mind. It's the big topic in the Higher Ed space and we're gearing up for that. It's going to be substantive. It's going to be a major change, not just for institutions, but for our students, particularly our continuing and returning students who are used to filling out the FAFSA a certain way, seeing certain numbers and information. I don't know exactly how things are going to shake out, but it's a real retraining for them too. How we award it, how we talk about it behind the scenes, how we communicate it on the web, are all a big deal considering how many students rely on federal aid across the country, particularly our institution. Within our school, we talked about student surveys previously, and we are soon launching our first student survey and I'm really looking forward to getting that feedback. Regarding student feedback, that's something else I would say that while you're preparing for the One-Stop, conduct student surveys and get some student feedback on your current models and how they're working and what students want. That was a critical piece that we did. We had student data from our institutional advancement team and other sources that helped us confirm we didn't miss anything inadvertently. Moving forward, I'm really looking forward to seeing what students think about the One-Stop. "Was your question answered fully? Did the person you spoke with treat you well?" We look at lots of student IDs every day, but to the student, we are the one Berklee. We must recognize that and treat students accordingly. It's very important that they feel part of the community and that all members of the community recognize that.

We're also looking to be more proactive. We know where the pain points are in the student life cycle, during the admissions process, during the registration process, the bill payment process, etc. We're collecting data all the time, via Salesforce and other methods, and we're looking at this data to say, "last year on this date, XYZ thing happened and generated a ton of volume, so how can we make sure that doesn't happen next year?" We're really looking forward to being more proactive, engaging in alternative communication methods, such as text messaging and other things to help us get the message out to students in a timelier fashion and in a way that's geared towards them and how they want to be communicated to. We do a lot through email, like I think most institutions do, but we want to explore alternative ways to communicate critical deadlines and critical information to students because they get a ton of emails and there's a lot on their minds. I've always believed that a student's primary responsibility at a college is to learn, not to navigate administration. Another benefit of the One-Stop is that now everything is from one place instead of four places or three places depending on the model.

Another piece of advice I would give to anyone starting a One-Stop is you know you're going to have your vision of how you want it to be. It's going to change. You're going to have to adapt and refine. You're going to have to learn from your mistakes. I always say, "fear regret more than failure." Try things. As long as you're operating from the students perspective--what's best for the student—often you will succeed. If you do fail, you've learned something. Don't become so enamored with what you've developed that you hold onto it to the detriment of what could be better. Solicit feedback, you will get it. It's fine to ask. Whenever we have students and meetings, I will ask them flat out, "how do you think the One-Stop is going? Is there anything about it that you like, or that you don't like?" Based on some of those answers, we've implemented changes. You also have the various constituencies across campus that you must listen to as well. Always be flexible in your process because where we are today is close to the vision, but we've created some iterations that looking back on I am happy it happened the way I did. I think the true success of a One-Stop is measured in how little your students need you. What I mean by that is we are here for our students. That's why we have an open email, and phone, and in-person apparatus, but we don't want them to have to need us. We want them to have the communication, the tools, the systems, and the knowledge to pay their bill, to register for classes, to take care of everything they need to take care of on their own. There will be students that have unique situations, students that need more attention, and you want your time to be able to spend with those students and I think that's really where service is most powerful, when working with unique student situations to help them get resolved.

JFOSE: YYou made very good point there because we'll have some students from time to time that need more handholding and then you have other students who are on complete autopilot and don't ever want to hear from us at all. In those cases, you're appealing to two distinct audiences, but both require a One-Stop at one point or another to help them through this process. Let me ask you, what is your active student count or how many students do you have registered?

Kevin: Let me briefly explain about Berklee Online before answering the question. For Berklee Online, we provide federal financial aid support, but we do not provide the other One-Stop Services (registration and billing). They're about 1,800 to 2,000 degree students. The students that use federal aid are a part of our responsibilities within the One-Stop through Student Financial Services. Our main campuses (Berklee College, Boston Conservatory, BerkleeNYC and Valencia), are expecting about 6,500 undergraduate and graduate students. So the total number of students we serve, or have the opportunity to serve, is approximately 8,300-8,500.

JFOSE: From that perspective, I want to ask one final question. Some colleges dedicate a One-Stop to a student [relational] and others have it to where doesn't matter [transactional] and anybody can come in at any time and speak with anybody. How do you have it at your specific college? Do you have a transactional model where anybody can help or a relational model where you want to encourage the relationships between the One-Stop and an individual student?

Kevin: We built it on a transactional model. Aid is a bit of an outlier because there are some students that have specific aid issues or need counseling, and we have escalation systems within the One-Stop to help with those more specialized advising moments, but generally it's transactional. Going back to the axiom that any staff member can assist any student with nearly any question, that is the critical component of why our One Stop works. We ultimately chose that model because it allows the most flexibility. Sometimes when you have individual staff assigned to students, if that person isn't there, the student may be less inclined to seek assistance or worse… they may not be able to get the same level of assistance from someone else. I think it's great to have that kind of relationship, but I think most of it can be handled at a transactional level. We always have meeting rooms, and we have the ability for any staff member to spend more time with a student, and even if we're not developing a long-term relationship, we can have an acute relationship where we're not just saying, "thanks for your check. Let me clear your bill," but instead "let's talk about your aid. Let's talk about why we need this tax return." We have low to mid-level counseling on various things built into our training and capabilities. Additionally, we're able to provide a level of "general" top level support for other areas should students ask.

BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

ONE STOP AT OCC

KATE MOHR & SHEENAH HARTIGAN | OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE | ENROLLMENT SERVICES

Kate Mohr
Ocean County College
Director of Enrollment and Retention Services

Sheenah Hartigan
Ocean County College
Executive Director of Enrollment Services

I serve as the Executive Director of Enrollment Services here at Ocean. I've been at the college for almost ten years. I started here as the CRM Administrator tasked with implementing the College of CRM system. Prior to that, I spent years at a proprietary school in the admissions and financial aid realm.

Kate is the Director of Enrollment and Retention Services here at Ocean. Previously, she served as a Student Services Administrator with me as one of my first hires. I've been in Higher Education for 16 years and Kate's been in K-12 for 10 years and in Higher Ed for nine.

Ocean County College is situated equidistant between Philadelphia and New York, right along the Jersey Shore where the MTV show was filmed. We're about 7-8 min from the beach. We sit on 275 pristine acres. We were founded in 1964, so we're coming up on our sixtieth anniversary next year, which is very exciting for us. The college is a community college, so a not-for-profit institution—also not for loss, we like to clarify. We award AA and AS degrees as well as a plethora of certificates in over 70 areas of study. We have a large percentage of dual enrollment students which receive high school and college credit at the same time. We serve other members of the community: our seniors through our Silver Edge program, businesses and organizations. We have a planetarium and a robust theater on campus. Kean University also has a building on our campus, and we have multiple locations at various high schools throughout the county as well.

Community colleges are interesting in that students come in for one reason and they very often end up in a liberal arts degree because they're transferring in credits or past life experiences from somewhere else. So, liberal arts is our most popular degree. As far as applications are concerned, our most popular academic programs are Pre-Nursing, Criminal Justice, and Business Administration.

WHY OCC IMPLEMENTED ONE STOP

OCC CAMPUS

JFOSE: Now you and your colleagues decided to create a one-stop model at your college. Can you tell me when you started having those conversations and what sparked that?

Sheenah: Back in 2016, we did something called the Student Success Experience. That was a brainchild when we got back our SSI (Student Satisfaction Inventory) in 2016. We quickly realized there were some areas of opportunity at the institution. We found that our students were consistently dissatisfied with areas that were of great importance to them. Customer service was the foundation of much of what they said, and the areas specifically that lacked that level of customer service our students were expecting were in the enrollment service areas: Advising, Registration, and Financial Aid. Students agreed across the board that there was a lack of knowing what was going on across the campus, of feeling like the institution treated them like individuals. It was at that point that we thought, "we're going to have to do something to address these gaps." So, we launched a student success experience. We chose to look at the institution through the lens of a student. I think administrators very often are caught in the day to day of what they do, and they don't look at the opposite, which is what is the student going through? We think, "this is what I have to do to financially process and package student," but we don't think "what are the communications the students are getting. How long are they waiting between submitting documents? What are the phone calls they're receiving? What service do they get when they come in?" We realized, like many institutions probably, that our students were going through the student shuffle. The communications were disjointed at best. We were inconsistent with the service that we were providing. At that point it made sense to start looking at One-Stop models for our enrollment services structure and we began to look at various institutions to see how we could shape a program. How can we make this work? As a community college, we don't have buckets of money. We don't have large budget lines where we can look at endowments and build buildings, so we knew we had to focus on the programming first. We had a team with representatives from across campus at various levels—including students—and began to look at different organizations that had implemented a one-stop to figure out what we can do. What can we not do? What do we want to do? What do we definitely not want to do? In the beginning it was a lot of saying, "we don't want to do that. That doesn't seem to be working." We started to craft it. The big thing that we learned when going through this process was that you don't want to move staff members from a previous job into a one-stop role. That was going to be hard though. We had a lot of buy-in from the college from our presidential leadership team. What we ended up doing was within Student Affairs, as people would retire or resign, we would position those budget lines for the one-stop. It started with me. I was moved into a Director role—by myself. That was in 2017. I was then given four part-time budget lines from people that had resigned or retired, and we hired 4 Part-Time Staff. We called them Student Service Technicians back then. Then I was given a full-time budget line and that's when we hired Kate. We stole her from our e-learning area. She was an Advisor, and luckily for all of us she applied. So, it was the five of us and in November of 2017 we decided to give it a go and we went out into the lobby of our administration building and said, "Hey, can we help you?" I think we were all amazed when the students said, "Yes, that sounds great." From there, it just worked and grew.

JFOSE: You and I share a lot in common because I took the remnants of what was previously a one-stop and then elaborated on it when I started in 2017 with Brandman University in Southern California. Similar timelines as well. I have a couple of questions that came up from this last question. Number one, when I looked at my team, I wanted to address customer service needs and we were finding that five specific disciplines were being addressed as part of this process. We had Financial Aid, Military and VA under our belt, Bursar, Registrar, and Admissions. Those are the customer service lines that we addressed. What disciplines does your team work with?

Sheenah: When we began in 2017, we were customer service focused because of the Noel Levitz survey. In fact, three out of the four people I first hired as part-time are still with us, which is kind of exciting six years later. Customer service was primary. We hired people that had no higher education experience but came from customer service. We hired an Assistant Manager from ShopRite grocery store, and we thought, "if you can handle turkeys the day before Thanksgiving, you can probably handle students." We hired somebody who was working at a sub shop thinking, "if you can figure out New Jersey people on their subs, you're probably okay to figure out students and parents, right?" When we started, we began with financial aid, records and registration, and baseline advising. Not going in depth with students as far as degree audits, but really baseline advising. In 2020, where there was a small pandemic, you might remember, we took on the Bursar's Office payments in March of 2020, which was great timing as well as the Admissions Office. We took on the Admissions Office in July of 2020 and I eliminated the Admissions Office in September of 2020. I folded those budget lines into the department. That's it, right? Advising, Registration, Financial Aid, the Bursar's Office, and Admissions.

Kate: Did you also talk about communications?

Sheenah: No, I didn't talk about it. Thanks. We took on communications for the institution for potential students in 20…What year Kate? 2017? 2018?

Kate: I want to say it was before COVID. So, 2018 maybe. We just started taking a piece at a time and then it was division wide.

Sheenah: We're like Pac-man, Scott. We did a little bit and then a little bit and then we found all the blinking balls and just sucked them up because it made sense. That communications piece, at first, we said, "we'll answer the phones since there's no operator here at the college." Then it was "we'll make an email address, and we'll start to answer emails." Departments said, "wait, you'll answer the phones for us? Great." So, Advising transferred their line over. "You'll answer our emails for us? Perfect. Let's forward them all over to The Hub," which is what we call our one-stop. While we implemented our one-stop in 2017, we also gave birth institutionally to the country's first AI chatbot at a community college. We're the first community college to launch and implement a chatbot. We consider our chatbot to be a one-stop employee because he is cross-trained in the same areas that a one-stop employee is.


OCC CAMPUS

Don't tell the staff this, but he works a lot harder because he works 24-7. He gets no vacation or sick time. So, that is a big piece of our department as well. Then in 2020, we took on retention also and that's Dr. Mohr's baby.

Kate: It is. We started with this knowledge that retention had been on decline even prior to the pandemic, which was a similar phenomenon to what we're seeing at, you know, in the community college sector. We knew we needed to do something to strategically address retention at the institutional level because what was happening was there were pockets of retention efforts. One department would do this for the students they served. One department would do something else. There was no institutional-wide retention effort. That's where we started. We decided to go broadsword and use the same successful model that Dr. Hartigan developed. It was a collaborative approach versus a case-load approach, which is a divergence from what you typically see for retention. We use, Advise, which is our CRM for retention. We use that to facilitate proactive outreach in the form of phone calls, texts, and emails to students before the term ends and we realize that there's an issue. We try to reach out to them as soon as there is an issue. We have faculty who ping us through the system. We have a team of full-time Success Coaches who are facilitating the outreach.

JFOSE: You mentioned your CRM. How many systems do you work with? I know that can be a little bit of a pain point for a one-stop because staff must work with so many different systems.

Kate: We use Recruit for retention. We use Advise. We also have QLess, which is a virtual queuing system. We have Colleague, which is our student information system. Then we have our student self-service portal.

JFOSE: Do you work with Financial Aid at all?

Kate: We do at the baseline level. We have what will be considered tier one. We don't do packaging, we don't do verifications, but we do interpret for students and help them to figure out what they need to move forward as far as their financial aid package. We also assist with FAFSA workshops.

JFOSE: I know with my previous location we didn't have any student workers. I had 66 members of my one-stop team between 27 different locations. Do you work with student workers?

Sheenah: We can't do without them. We love our student workers. We have four student workers on the docket for the 2023-2024 academic year. It's based on institutional funding, but our student workers are extremely helpful. They triage our lobby and get our students into the queue. They're helpful with our Chat Bot because they can translate institutional semantics for our students in ways that we can't. They know the lingo and the language. They look at all our emails and our campaigns before we send them and tell me when it's terrible and then nobody is going to read it. So, they're absolutely an extremely valuable part of our team.

BENEFITS OF THE ONE STOP MODEL AT OCC

JFOSE: Let's get into the specifics of a one-stop model. In your opinion, what are some of the greatest advantages of having a one-stop model?

Sheenah: There's a few. One is that we could control the narrative of customer service at the institution. We were able to build it into job descriptions and hold people accountable for the service that they're providing, which hadn't been done before institutionally. We now have a college-wide customer service training that all new employees go through. Kate and I facilitate a module called "Customer Service: It's Everyone's Job." We had a Noel Levitz survey issued in 2018, so the institution saw significant influence on our various customer service areas that needed an improvement were now areas of excellence for the institution, specifically advising, registration, and the focus groups really provided that additional triangulation to show it is the one-stop that made this impact. Anecdotally, customer service then statistical significance on the impact of customer service institutionally. A lot of times people say that it cuts down on staff. It doesn't. It just re-purposes staff. It was hard when we first implemented because people felt defensive over their jobs. They asked, "why do we want you to do this?" Well, because we can answer our school code 57 times in a day and it's fine and it allows our tier two department to focus on the students with complexities who really need the assistance. I think it's efficient. Our communications are now streamlined across the institution. Our department pushes out all emails for potential and current students, so we don't run the risk of over saturating at any given point or ghosting our students for weeks at a time, so they don't know what's happening. I think our communications have really benefited from the one-stop as well. Another benefit is the student insight that we get from the chatbot, and from being in the lobby and being on the phones, hearing and seeing the voicemails and the emails. We're getting real-time student insight that allows us to address real problems in a way that I don't know that the institution was doing before. Often, higher education runs a little bit slower. We put out a fall Qualtrics survey and then we analyze the data for a few months and then we think about what we should do and then we have a meeting about what we should do and then we meet about the meeting. The One-Stop allows us to make data driven decisions in a way that's impactful on the students. Those are just a few things that I can think of. What do you think, Kate?

Kate: In addition to those things, I think a one-stop allows institutions to make known the hidden curriculum of higher education, which is not immediately known to every student. We don't assume that every student who comes through our doors knows that next step. That is also a significant benefit of having a one-stop because it makes those pieces known and there's a single person before them who can guide.

OCC CAMPUS

AREAS OF CAUTION

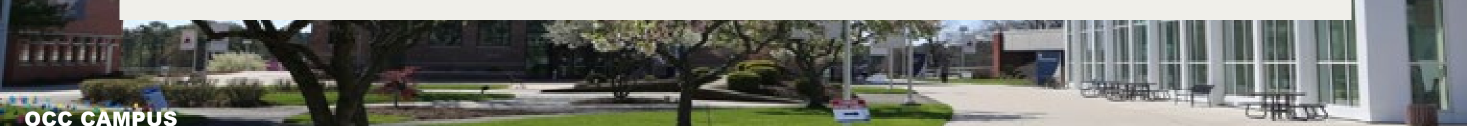
JFOSE: I can tell you from personal experience that being a first-time student, moving into a college environment can be very overwhelming for someone who doesn't have someone holding their hand when they don't know what to do. For institutions that are out there who are considering beginning a one-stop experience, would you recommend prior to that looking at doing either a pilot or a focus group to gauge and find out what the students' needs are?

Kate: Sheenah has asked me to speak with our one-stop for folks who are coming in to visit and the one piece that they always comment on—and the area of struggle that they've experienced—is that they built the building first. When everyone asks, "how did you figure this out?" I said, "that was Dr. Hartigan. She said, 'we were going out in the hallway.' We did a soft launch and that helped her to determine and review needs." Dr. Hartigan used that information to assist with developing the building. That soft launch was the comment that I've had from just about every tour guide. They think that was smart. Other folks say, "we're going to do a one-stop and it's going to go here, and this is the building."

JFOSE: And sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.

Sheenah: There's another piece of that too. You must involve students and figure out what their needs are. There are so many data points that are hit in that process that we didn't know. When are students coming into the building? What is the most popular day to complete college transactions? When are they answering the phones? When are they emailing? How long does it take a student to be served in this capacity? How many times do they have to come back and forth to the institution? These are all data points we were not looking at previously and now had access to. Even in things that we thought we knew, we didn't. At the same time, we were soft launching the physical one-stop, we also launched the virtual one-stop as well. The goal was always to remain in those best practices of 80% virtual and 20% physical. We spent a long time crafting this virtual one-stop. In fact, we had a meeting and I wanted to prove a point. We had this beautiful screen, and the website was up, and I went to the lobby, and I grabbed a couple of students. I asked, "can you guys come in here and look at this website. What is the first thing you think?" I'm ready. I'm patting my shoulders because I think they're going to be like blown away at what we did. These three students came in—they were baseball players-and they said, "this is terrible." I was horrified. I asked, "what's terrible about it?" They said, "I would never use this site. This is too many clicks. It's too complex. It's too this and too that." That experience was such a valuable humbling moment. In building this foundation that has come to be very successful, it was one of those beginning moments where I was truly humbled by the fact that if you do not include students every step of the way, you are setting yourself up for failure. The fact was we had no idea what students wanted as far as virtual one-stop because we didn't ask them. At that point, we knew the value of student workers. We knew the value of making sure we were asking every step of the way. "What do you need? What do you want?" Then taking those anecdotes and combining them with the data that we developed off that soft launch.

JFOSE: That's amazing and it's so important to consider ease of use. Let's shift a little to some of those opportunities that we were talking about earlier when we look at that process. I know for myself, siloing was a big issue with central administration. Can you tell me what some of the experiences are that you had where you would probably reconsider if you were starting a new One-Stop? What's some advice you would give them?



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Sheenah: One of the hardest things that we took on was taking payments. It sounds silly because it should be easy, right? Payments are taken everywhere. We didn't have an institutional process that was ironclad, and it made it difficult for us to take that on. Knowing sometimes you're going to be asked to take on transactions or tasks or areas and you don't have to take on the process as it exists. You can still complete the function, but you must make sure that the process makes sense with the mission and the vision of the One-Stop Department itself. One of the first things that Kate and I did was we sat down with our team, and we built a mission statement, and we built a vision statement, and we assigned values. We've upheld those for the past six years in everything we do. I think that was a piece that wasn't always clear when we first started. We thought, "we're taking on these functions from this department and this is how they do it." We don't have to do things how another department did it. We must know why the fence is there, why it was built, what they used, but it doesn't mean we had to do the exact same thing. We must take payments, but we don't have to take them in the same way that they were being taken before. That was one of the things I would have liked to have been aware of going in. The way in which you sell, for lack of a better word, the new structure of the one-stop is important to get the institutional buy-in. Not everyone is going to be on board with this model. People think it's going to be more work. People think someone's taking their job. They think what they're doing is going to become obsolete. The way in which the model is presented to the institution and the campus at large is important because you need support and buy-in and have a good network of collaborators to be successful.

JFOSE: One of the things I wanted to talk about that I didn't hear mentioned was a conflict over control that we encountered with our university where a department in central admin would expect our team to be experts in a specific discipline. Instead, I instructed my people to be at proficiency level because we can always go back to the experts to do research or if there's those one-off situations. But our primary expertise is on customer service. Do you have a different view on that or what are your thoughts?

Kate: Speaking from an operation standpoint, that push-and-pull is always there. It still happens to this day. There are many different folks in each different department and although you may have worked out with the department head what your team is responsible for, it doesn't mean that everyone in their team has received that information or recalls it or they think, "but I know this, why didn't they just tell them that or just tell the student this," but that thing involves 12 other things. That push-and-pull doesn't ever go away. There are times when it's more and there are times when it's less. Right now, we're in a time when it's less. It's an ongoing process. I don't know that it ever really goes away.

Sheenah: It's interesting because every department is different, and it really depends on the personalities of the people that you work with. Many of the people that we work with have been the same players for the past six years. Some people ask, "Do you think your team could advise students that are below 2.0 because that would be like so helpful for my advisors." We say, "We could do that." Then the flip side, you'll have somebody that says, "Someone on your team made a mistake. We should take away all access to everything immediately." Then we're saying "Wait." You're always going to see that push-and-pull. A lot of it depends on personality. You can plan positions. You can plan structures and models. You can't plan people. Sometimes that's hard.

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FUTURE OF ONE STOP AT OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE

JFOSE: One of the wisest things I ever heard an administrator say was there is very little that we cannot go back and correct. If someone wanted to take an entire discipline away from an institution's one-stop because of one mistake, it's important to keep that in mind because again, whether it's financial aid, whether it's a customer service issue, time heals all wounds and those are things that can be addressed immediately. Thank you for mentioning that. Moving on to future endeavors, what's on the horizon for you and your one-stop team? What's coming up in the next year or so?

Kate: There is room to expand on the retention efforts that we have in place. It's a piece at a time. The Hub didn't start as large as it is now and neither did retention, so there's many different avenues to go as far as different student populations, touch points, communication. That's a big piece because it is housed within our One-Stop.

Sheenah: On the other side, once we eliminated the Admissions Department, all recruitment and admissions efforts run through our areas. It makes sense. If someone is giving a presentation at a high school about the college, now they're the same person that can answer and advise in your financial aid question. On the flip side now, the focus on continuing to find new sources of enrollment. As Dr. Mohr is focused on keeping the students we have, we're also tasked with finding those students. The high school population in the country across the board is declining between 2025 and 2037. We're going to see about a half a million less students by 2037 than we see now and so we must find new ponds to fish in. We have a new president at our college who just began about six weeks ago. A big focus of hers is trying to expand our nontraditional learners, trying to do better at recruiting and retaining our Hispanic students, looking at our first-generation college students, in a way that's more strategic with all that goes the parts that come through the one-stop. Our team is the one right now that's calling a student who inquires about the college within an hour of that inquiry. Our team is the one that's calling somebody after they apply an hour after that application comes through. Understanding that different students need different things as far as onboarding and enrollment. There's always going to be areas of opportunity to get better.

JFOSE: You had made mention of the importance of cross training earlier. What would you say to a vice president or administrator who then goes to you and upon your request for cross trainings asks you a question such as "how long is this going to take?" They're certainly looking at it from a different lens. How would you respond to something like that?

Kate: If we're just talking about how long it takes someone coming in to be functional, we have a six-week training rogram, and they train in all the functional areas and systems of our one-stop.

Sheenah: Do you want to talk about training altogether, Kate? Training for us is continuous, ongoing, and dynamic.

Kate: Yes. What we do is at the beginning of every year prior to July, we build out a training calendar that consists of our larger trainings. That could be training on serving veteran students, it could be training on customer service. Then we have smaller just-in-time trainings that coincide with where we are at that given point in the year. For instance, if we're near drop-add, we might do a quick training on those screens, or student information system, or training on SAP appeals for financial aid. Whatever the students need to be doing or potential barriers that they might face, depending on where we are in the term, that would constitute our just-in-time training. In addition to that, you're also responsible for our technicians' professional growth. It also becomes a question of what each individual person needs to take the next steps in their career.

JFOSE: I know when I was with my previous institution I would arrange monthly chats, which would be virtual through Zoom. In addition to that, I would have regionals twice per year between our northern campuses and our southern campuses to meet up in-person and get us specific information to get certain gaps addressed. Once per year, we would get together all our one-stop teams to have a symposium, which was a multiple-day event that created a lot of synergy and networking opportunities and great information. Then at the end of the year, to help facilitate continuous growth within the division, we also created a written assessment that the administrators wanted to see and make sure that we were meeting the minimums of what each department was looking for with their discipline. I agree with you in terms of the training model. I think it's incredibly important and we must continue to revisit it all the time.

Sheenah: Something else that Dr. Mohr has focused on that's important for our team is population training as well. Not every student needs the same thing. The cultures and expectations of students are different. We've had training on our orthodox population. They're not going to come to an open house on a Saturday. Things that people might not know. We've had training on our veteran and military students. We've had training on inclusive language and microaggressions. There's a lot of things that we hold our team responsible for knowing. Dr. Mohr's training calendar is overwhelming to look at for me, even though it's color coded. It's extremely organized and helpful and we get a lot of questions about it.

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JFOSE: Regarding the student population, are you on a semester, trimester, or quarter base?

Sheenah: Semester.

JFOSE: About how many active students do you have from all your combined locations?

Sheenah: We had a little over 7,000 students in 2022. A big change since COVID is that most of our students are part-time instead of Full-Time. About 4,000 of our students are part-time, about 3,000 full-time. About 23% of our population is dual enrollment. 23% are nontraditional. We get about 2,000 students a year that are brand new. We've been declining since COVID, not nearly as much as our sister schools. Going into this semester, we are currently up in enrollment of students, head count, and credit.

JFOSE: Between you, your staff, and the student workers, what would you say is the ratio of One-Stop employees to student population?

Sheenah: That's a tough one because initially when you mentioned that in the beginning of the interview, I wondered "are we talking about 7,000 divided by the 20 of us that are here?"

JFOSE: It's an interesting question because sometimes you look at it from whether you are trying to elevate a relational model or a transactional model. I have spoken with colleagues who believe that a transactional model is easy for everybody because anybody should be able to answer questions at point of contact. Whereas other colleges have a different view on that, which I would prefer, that have one point of contact who can help to develop a relationship with a student. I'm not saying either one is right or wrong. Where does your one-stop go with that?

Sheenah: We do a transactional model. Everyone should be able to answer every question. Everyone should be able to pick up phone. Everyone should be able to answer an email. The theory behind that, as Kate mentioned before, is that it's a broadsword versus a paring knife. We use the same model when it comes to our retention efforts. Within our CRM system, when we're making outgoing phone calls, taking incoming phone calls, it is first in first out. We don't have a recruiter that goes out, meets a student, and then that's the person that follows up with them. We have a bucket approach, so all the calls are sitting in a bucket and if you're scheduled for outgoing calls, you're plugging through the bucket. It's the same thing with our retention team. If we were to do it as a case load where we say, "these are my students," I would need 42 technicians to get to a 250-person case load, which is what's usually acceptable. I don't have 42 humans that I can hire Full-Time. So, for us, being transactional is doing more with less.

JFOSE: I just want to follow up on one other thing. Kate, did you have any updates in reference to the training process?

Kate: In general, the way we have training set up is that you have your monthly trainings, your just-in-time trainings, your population training, and we also train on programs. We feature different programs. We want our folks to know the ins and the outs of the programs, the highlights, what they can expect, career outcomes, salary. We also plan on their campaigns such as phone call campaigns. It is not part of training necessarily but depending on the type of outreach that we're looking to facilitate with students, that could be another piece to the just-in-time training. For instance, if we're going to be doing a stop out campaign, then we want to make sure everyone is up to date on financial aid, on completing the application. In addition, we include training that's related to different events that we're hosting or that we're assisting with.

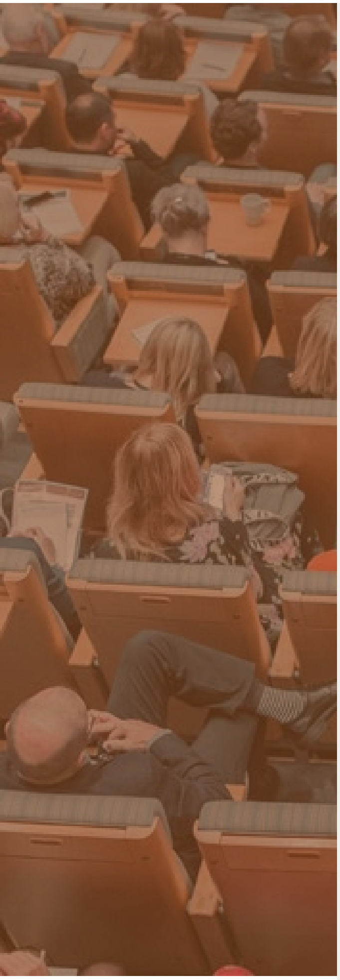
JFOSE: One final question. Do you find that your students have a preferred method of communication? Is it chat? Text? Is it emails? Is it telephone? Is it in-person? What are your experiences?

Kate: It really varies by student. I think that Dr. Hartigan would agree that we have a very good response rate using text. If we send a survey, we're going to get about 30% response rate versus if the college sends a survey where it's 10% or below.

Sheenah: Yeah, that's 30% response rates on our text campaigns or outgoing calls. When our Hub Team does outgoing calls, there's 24% on the answer rate. It does depend on the student, and it depends on their preference. I've heard that question before. We don't all want the same thing. They want you to give them options. That's what they want. They're used to options.

Kate: The person who may answer a phone in September, might be less likely to do so in December. We've always felt that we must make sure that we offer different outreach modalities so that students have multiple ways of responding.

JFOSE: Dr. Hartigan, Dr. Mohr, I really appreciate your time today.



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Scott Saltman

Founder, The Journal for One Stop Excellence