Over the years, I cherished my role as the “cool aunt” to my college-aged niece. I was the fun-loving relative who whisked her away on adventures, starkly contrasting her parents’ seemingly outdated ways. This badge of honor wasn’t just a title; it was an identity I flaunted, much to my brother’s chagrin.

However, as time has passed, I’ve noticed a shift. Despite reassurances from my niece that I still outpace her parents in the cool department, it’s evident that I’m no longer the pop culture savant I once was. I don’t care what NACS Research Analyst Lacey Wallace and the OnCampus Research Student Panel tell me; I refuse to embrace a crop top. Additionally, the ever-evolving landscape of slang leaves me bewildered, earning blank stares or embarrassed chuckles when I attempt words like “rizz” and “bussin” among her friends.

This linguistic drift isn’t confined to my personal life; it mirrors my professional journey in the campus store industry. As I cling to the vernacular of Gen X and elder millennials, I have realized that slang is not the only language in my life that has changed. Being part of this amazing industry has impacted my speech and conversation choices. Words and phrases that flow naturally for me have little to no meaning to my friends and family.

It took three conversations with my father to convince him that equitable access and inclusive access have nothing to do with social justice. I have yet to find a party where anyone is impressed by my knowledge of open to buy. Not to mention all the acronyms that we throw around in this industry.

Over the past few years, and under the influence of NACS Vice President for Industry Collaboration and Development Jeff Nelson, my vocabulary has increased to include terms from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Although some of the terminology has become second nature to me as well as others who worked on the NACS Foundation Standards Project, there are terms and uses that may be unfamiliar to those who are just digging into the Campus Store Standards for the first time or terms that may cause communication barriers with campus administrators who are not yet familiar with CAS or the Campus Store Standards.

As I have worked on this project, one of the most common questions that I have received is the difference between “should” and “must” statements that appear throughout the Campus Store Standards. On the surface, it may seem like it is a random word choice to ensure that all the standards do not begin with a verbatim phrase. However, in this case, the words are specifically chosen to reflect a purpose.

Statements that include the word “must” connotate a practice or objective that will be achievable by all campus stores across the board, whereas “should” statements are seen as a best practice for some campus stores but recognizes that, due to individual circumstances, may not be achievable by all campus stores.

CAS uses the expression “functional area” throughout their publications and communications. While initial reference may allow one to infer that this means a given department on a campus, it is a little more nuanced. According to CAS, functional area is “to indicate a program or service that may not have the separate organizational structure typically associated with a department. Examples of functional areas include academic advising,
While there are definable parts of the Campus Store Standards, always remember that there is space for each institution to interpret what works best for their campus and students.

housing and residential life, leadership, and internships.”

Additionally, some of the General Standards that CAS has developed across all functional areas of the campus have distinct meanings. When there are references to Aspects of Identity in the CAS Standards, this terminology goes beyond not discriminating against legally protected classes that are included in codes, laws, and institutional policies, to ask that campuses include potential identity considerations such as neurodivergence, family educational history, family or caregiver responsibilities, socio economic factors, and source of income or credit information, to name a few.

There may be additional aspects that should be considered on your campus that may not impact other institutions in the same way. While there are definable parts of the Campus Store Standards, always remember that there is space for each institution to interpret what works best for their campus and students.

As you begin to utilize standards or talk about them with others on your campus, there may be a need to define some of the jargon that is commonplace in campus stores. While it’s not based on our generation, our industry slang can be just as confusing to administrators, faculty, and students as Gen Z’s slang is to me.

Others may need help to understand terms and phrases that are important to campus stores. Whether it’s defining copyright compliance subtopics like “fair use,” “first sale,” and “public domain” or helping colleagues understand meaning and implications of licensing, there are bound to be learning curves for everyone as the Campus Store Standards becomes a go-to resource for the industry and is utilized on campuses.

As our industry continues to evolve and as campus stores begin to utilize the Campus Store Standards, it’s essential to recognize that, much like generational slang, our professional jargon can be just as bewildering to others. The NACS Foundation and NACS Education are committed to assisting in these transitions. If you haven’t yet, I encourage you to download a copy of the Campus Store Standards—free for NACS members—and join us in refining how we communicate within and beyond our campuses.

By embracing the nuances of our professional language and continuing to learn from each other, we can ensure that our industry remains inclusive, dynamic, and, most importantly, understood. Let’s not only keep up but lead the way in clarity and innovation. CS

Jaymee Skelly is director of the NACS Foundation.

RESOURCES

Campus Store Standards—if you have not yet downloaded a copy of the standards, access is free for NACS members. Visit https://www.nacs.org/campus-store-standards to request the code.

CAS Glossary of Terms—Go to https://www.cas.edu/glossary-of-terms.html

NACS University Collegiate Retail Terms and Definitions—Go to https://learn.nacs.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=416 (NACS login required)

GET CONNECTED ON THE HUB

NACS’ online community, The Hub, offers social networking and collaboration for all members at http://thehub.nacs.org.

 Welcome to The Hub

NACS’ Connected Community for the campus retailing industry.

Engage | Collaborate | Discover

Upcoming Events

Latest Discussions

RE: Osiala Vendors?

KB

St. Bob Bonds, 4 min ago

Posted in NACS Discussion Community

Hi Sarah, Hydro Flask has a minimum of 4 bottles for each transaction at 6 accessories for each transaction. Sarah, I know you have your account with us but wanted to make sure the whole NACS HUB community knows this for stores that are not yet ...

Recent Shared Files

RE: Starting Dis Curated Interview

GM

***

To: Starting Dis Curated Interview

Uploaded by CGM

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