



About College Stores

The National Association of College Stores (NACS) estimates that there are 4,500 college stores that provide services to U.S. colleges and universities.

The Mission of College Stores

College stores exist to support the educational mission of the colleges and universities they serve. College stores are efficient, professionally-run retail operations that return vitally important dollars back to students and are generally financially self-sustaining – meaning their operations are not subsidized by tuition or government funding.

Today's college stores:

- Work in close partnership with faculty to facilitate more affordable textbook adoptions and ordering;
- Procure course materials in a wide variety of print and digital formats from multiple sources;
- Manage complex logistics to ensure that course materials specified by professors are available for students before classes start;
- Provide students with accurate information for making informed decisions about purchasing course materials.

The Diversity of College Stores

While college stores share a common mission, they can differ greatly in size, location, and ownership. Stores located on college campuses typically are owned and operated by the college or university. Stores may also be operated by an external vendor who has entered into a contract with the college. Other stores are organized as cooperatives or run by student associations.

Common types of college stores:

- **Institutional:** The store is owned and operated by the college or university.
- **Leased:** The store is on or near campus but is operated by an external company that has entered into a leasing arrangement with the college or university.
- **Cooperative:** Often a nonprofit, this type of store is owned by students and faculty, sometimes in a shareholder structure where governance is by a board of trustees or directors.
- **Student-run:** Some stores are run by students.
- **Nonprofit:** Just like other nonprofit institutions, the store is run by a board of directors or trustees.
- **Private:** The store is privately owned and operated; usually refers to off-campus stores.

