NACS Guide to Campus Outreach

Ideas for Developing Stronger Relationships with Campus Constituents and Increasing the Visibility of College Stores

National Association of College Stores
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The Importance of Campus Outreach

The college store is an indispensable campus resource and a trusted partner in higher education.

College stores deliver important products and services and offer unparalleled convenience to students, faculty, alumni, and administrators. Yet the value of the college store often is not fully appreciated or understood by these important constituents.

To help college stores build stronger relationships and increase their influence and effectiveness across the campus, NACS has developed this *Guide to Campus Outreach*.

The *Guide* presents a comprehensive compendium of ideas and best practices from member stores that can be tailored to each store’s needs. Included are practical suggestions to help stores:

- Identify partnership opportunities to support the college’s academic mission, enhance the college experience, or create new value;
- Take an active role in initiatives important to the college or a particular group;
- Share capabilities and expertise;
- Address issues surrounding textbook adoption and the cost of textbooks;
- Facilitate student- and college-sponsored activities;
- Help constituents understand and appreciate the store’s unique contributions to the entire campus community.
How to Use this Guide

The NACS Guide to Campus Outreach outlines ideas for connecting and communicating with four major constituent groups—faculty, students, alumni, and administrators—and four additional subgroups of administrators: business officers, student life administrators, admissions directors, and athletic directors.

Each section begins with an overview of the relationship between the group and the college store and the key messages the store may want to deliver to this group based on its particular interests and needs.

For each group, ideas are organized under four objectives:

1. **Educate**: Share news and information to help this group better understand the college store, how it operates, and its contributions to the college;

2. **Collaborate**: Partner with this group on projects that can better serve the campus community;

3. **Solicit Feedback**: Gain insights from this group to improve the store and its value to the campus;

4. **Support**: Assist the group in achieving its goals.

Because college stores differ widely in their access to resources for outreach, ideas within each of the four sections have generally been ranked by level of difficulty, starting with the easiest ideas and concluding with the ideas that require more resources or more challenging execution. Stores should adapt these ideas to their own capabilities.

The guide also includes a sample outreach plan that outlines initiatives to students, faculty, administrators, and alumni across a typical academic year. This plan is not intended to be inclusive of all the potential ideas in this guide. Rather, it should be viewed as a starting point or blueprint that a college store can adapt to its own needs.

Finally, it’s a good idea to keep track of outreach initiatives and contacts during the year for reference and follow-up.
Outreach to Faculty

Faculty and College Stores

The relationship between faculty and colleges stores can be a challenging one. Faculty depends on stores to provide textbooks and academic materials to students by the time classes begin and at a price students can reasonably afford.

However, textbook ordering and pricing is a complex process, creating significant misunderstandings on both sides and a sometimes contentious relationship. Faculty often does not understand why academic materials must be ordered so early or the impact of textbook adoption decisions on the prices students pay. Few faculty members are familiar with retailing or the economics of operating a retail store.

Key Messages for Faculty about the College Store

- Our goal is to be your partner in achieving the college’s academic mission.
- We both play a pivotal role in the cost of textbooks. There are steps we each can take to make textbooks as affordable as possible for students. Let’s work together.
- We have many products and services of value to you as an educator.
- We can help you create customized course materials.
- We can help promote the sales of faculty-authored books on campus.

Faculty Outreach Ideas

Educate

- Become involved in the faculty senate and make an annual presentation about the store at a faculty senate meeting, focusing on how the store can aid professors and their students.

- Submit news releases or articles about the store and upcoming store events to the editor of the faculty print or e-newsletter.

- Create a print or e-mail newsletter for faculty and staff. Share store news, explain textbook adoption policies and upcoming deadlines, announce upcoming events, highlight faculty authors, introduce store employees, or offer special discounts.

  - Post the newsletter on the store’s web site and make past issues available in an online archive.

  - Include an online sign-up for receiving e-newsletters on the store’s web site.
Place an opt-in message at the bottom of online textbook adoption forms.

Create an annual report about the store’s operations and the ways the store provides tangible and intangible value to the campus. List dollar amounts for net profits, contributions, in-kind services, and savings (including the amount students saved with used books and buyback).

Create a “Faculty Lounge” area on the store’s web site containing information on everything from featured faculty authors to textbook adoption deadlines.

Create pages on the store’s web site that feature faculty book recommendations as well as new books by faculty and alumni authors, to position the store as a resource for people who love to read.

Create a blog on the store’s web site as an educational tool or discussion starter, to help faculty better understand the college store business, as well as critical issues like textbook pricing, textbook adoption, copyright, and digital content.

- Feature author interviews and guest blogs, publishing news, and podcasts (audio blogs).
- Feature video of author presentations (vlogs).

**New Faculty**

Send new faculty a “welcome to campus” letter and information packet at the beginning of the new academic year or semester with a free gift or discount coupon. Include an overview of store services, frequently asked questions about textbook adoption and course materials, general book ordering information, other services the store provides, and a list of publisher representatives serving the campus.

Make a presentation about the store at the new faculty orientation meeting.

- Arrive early to personally greet each faculty member and hand them an information packet.
- Demonstrate how to submit online book orders.
- Highlight the store’s support for students and the college.

Invite new faculty members for a personal tour of the store with the store manager.

Host a new faculty lunch at the store and pair a store staff member with a new faculty member to provide personalized attention and answers to questions.
Host an annual breakfast or lunch for textbook coordinators in academic departments.

**Collaborate**

- Have a faculty-recommended section in the general and trade books department. Put up a shelf talker that says, “This book recommended by X, from X department.”

- Ask faculty members to submit the title of a book that made a difference in their lives or that they think is important for students to read, along with the reasons why. Compile the list and promote the selections using bookmarks, brochures, posters, web pages, etc.

- Make it convenient for faculty to inform the store about published works or titles they would like to see stocked at the store. Send out a “suggested or recommended” form to all faculty members or post the form on the store’s web site so faculty can fill out the form and submit it via e-mail.

- Promote to faculty the store’s ability to customize course materials to their specifications, and encourage them to use the store’s custom publishing services rather than off-campus copy shops so students have the convenience of one-stop shopping.

- Offer to be a guest speaker in business classes on retailing and entrepreneurship.

- Co-sponsor outside speakers who come to campus and facilitate sales of speaker books.

- Support classroom learning by enabling students to intern at the store or interview store personnel for class projects.

**Textbook Adoptions**

- Communicate via campus mail and e-mail with faculty and textbook coordinators about textbook adoption policies and deadlines and provide explanations for why the deadlines exist.

  - Send letters and e-mails explaining how on-time adoptions will benefit students and reminding faculty and assistants of upcoming due dates.

  - Publish textbook adoption policies and due dates in the faculty handbook.

  - Set up a system for contacting (by mail, e-mail, telephone, or personal visit) faculty who have not returned the adoption forms by the published due date.
o Each term, perform a “sell-through” analysis comparing the total number of books you stocked with the expectation of selling vs. the number you actually sold.

  o Share this analysis with faculty to improve their understanding of the factors that impact the availability of textbooks.

  o Ask for their assistance in improving sell-through percentages and the accuracy of textbook estimates, so all students get the course materials they need in a timely manner.

o When out-of-stocks occur, notify affected faculty and departments via phone calls, memos, or e-mail. Inform faculty when books are out-of-stock and send a follow-up message to inform faculty that the books have arrived.

o Provide incentives for meeting textbook adoption deadlines.

  o Hold a contest and reward departments that submit their orders early.

  o Offer a small gift or discount coupon for a store purchase if adoptions are submitted by a specific date.

  o Host a reception for departments to encourage timely submission.

  o Create a GOAL Program (Get On-time Adoption Lunch), in which faculty who get their adoptions in on time are entered into a drawing to win a complimentary lunch catered on campus.

  o Give a gift to the faculty member with the first adoption submitted in each term.

  o Offer to reward students of faculty members who adopt on time by placing a coupon for a candy bar on the shelf with the textbook to be redeemed at point of purchase.

**Solicit Feedback**

o Meet with faculty members one-to-one, either at their offices or over lunch or coffee.

o Create a faculty advisory committee and meet once per academic term (quarter, semester, etc.).

o Conduct focus groups of faculty members to understand their opinions about the store and its services, and identify opportunities for collaboration or enhanced understanding.
Conduct an annual survey of faculty satisfaction to understand how faculty views the store and its services, and identify opportunities for collaboration or enhanced understanding.

Support

Faculty Authors

- Set up a faculty authors section or shelf in the store.
- Host faculty author book signings.
- Be available to sell books by faculty authors at all campus author events.
- Create an awards event to recognize leading faculty authors. The event can be overseen by a committee of college scholars.
- Create a faculty authors page on the store's web site.
- Promote books by faculty authors in messages to alumni.
- Send a congratulatory note to the faculty author for each new publication and to let them know their book is carried by the store.

Faculty Appreciation

- If a list of faculty birthdays can be obtained, mail cards with a special birthday offer that can be redeemed in the store.
- Offer free delivery on campus for all special orders.
- Create a “faculty appreciation” day or evening at the store. Invite faculty to visit the store, enjoy refreshments, get special savings on merchandise, receive a small, store-branded gift, and be entered in a grand prize drawing.
- Enter faculty members into a drawing to receive 12 coupons for a free general or trade book of their choice each month.
- Enter faculty members into a drawing to win a tee shirt, a department lunch, a restaurant gift certificate, or lunch for a week from the campus food service.
- Offer a discount on all purchases made with the campus debit card.
- Give faculty a discount on general books.
- Increase discounts for academic and other departments that purchase supplies through the bookstore.

- Offer a readers’ advantage card.

**Philanthropic Support**

- Collect unwanted books from academic departments and donate them to international charities that provide books to needy colleges or students in developing countries.

- Sponsor a lecture series or endow academic initiatives.
Outreach to Students

Students and College Stores

College students have a widely held belief that textbooks cost too much and they often hold the college store responsible for textbook prices. Yet students also know that the college store is a convenient and comprehensive resource. Students depend on the college store for everything from academic materials to apparel to dorm décor.

Key Messages for Students about the College Store

- Your success is our primary mission. We are here to serve you.
- We are a convenient resource for all your needs.
- We are experts on textbooks and academic materials and can help you get the most value from your textbook investment.
- We are your advocate, not your adversary.
- We are an important part of your college experience.
- We can help you stay connected to college throughout your life.

Student Outreach Ideas

Educate

- Obtain a list of new students from the registrar’s office and mail welcome packets to their homes with a brochure that introduces the store’s products and services, policies, and technology discounts.
- Produce a print and/or web Q&A guide to help students understand textbook shopping and how to make the most of their textbook dollars.
  - Post the guide on the store’s web site.
  - Distribute the guide in the store.
  - Distribute the guide at orientation.
  - Mail the guide to new students.
- Send a welcome e-mail to incoming new students.
  - Include a link to the online version of the textbook section of the store web site and the textbook Q&A guide.
  - Include a coupon or link to a coupon for a free gift or special offer for new students.
- Invite top editors of the student newspaper to a behind-the-scenes tour as the store prepares for fall rush.
- Write a weekly column on upcoming store events for the student newspaper.
- Send regular news releases to student newspaper editors about store events, sales, and activities.

- Send the store’s annual report to the student government president.

- Get on the agenda for new-student orientation.
  - Prepare a brief presentation explaining how students get their textbooks and technology products from the store and what other merchandise and services are available.
  - Include a quick recap of the ways the store helps students.
  - Offer new students tours of the store.

- Set up a store page on popular social media sites, such as Facebook.com or MySpace.com, to communicate with students.

- Post in-store signs to compare the store’s prices to those of other local competitors where the store can offer students a price advantage.

- Create a “welcome to campus” newspaper or publication for all students at the start of the academic year, with comprehensive information about the college, the store, and the community.

- Create a blog on the store’s web site as an educational tool or discussion starter, to help students better understand the college store business, as well as critical issues like textbook pricing or buyback policies.
  - Feature author interviews and guest blogs, publishing news, and podcasts (audio blogs).
  - Feature video of author presentations (vlogs).
  - Have a student employee blog about life behind the scenes at the store.

- Create pages on the store’s web site that feature book recommendations for students from store staff members, as well as new books by faculty and alumni authors, to position the store as a resource for people who love to read.
Collaborate

- Invite art students to display their work in the store and/or help develop store displays.
- Facilitate student book clubs.
- Become a central resource for the needs of graduating seniors by collaborating with other departments and the current year’s class officers to help graduates and their families celebrate commencement.
- Set up a prompt or pop-up window at the end of online student registration to allow students to click to the store’s web site for a course materials list without having to re-enter their course data.
- Create a competition offering a bookstore gift card as the grand prize for students who produce public service announcements or short videos about the store and its services to students.
- Create in-store internships or other practical learning opportunities for students studying business, retailing, fashion merchandising, or marketing.

Solicit Feedback

- Create a student advisory council that meets periodically to advise the store on student issues and concerns and also serves as ambassadors for the store to the student community.
- Create a social responsibility advisory council to enable students to advise the store on sustainability and social responsibility issues, such as fair trade options, items made from recycled materials (see bullet points below), and organic alternatives in categories such as food and beverage or health and beauty.
- Implement a customer satisfaction survey to gather student feedback and suggestions for improvement on issues such as store policies, pricing, textbooks, selection of merchandise, and overall customer service.
- Invite students to new product preview events to enable them to share opinions and suggest product and service ideas.
- Place suggestion boxes in the general book department with title suggestion slips for customers to fill out, then create a “customer recommends” table or section.
Support

- Donate goods, services, and/or money for student organization fundraising and award programs in return for donation acknowledgement.

- Offer to host student fundraisers in the store.

- Invite student groups to display information about their events or causes in the store or in store windows.

- Create a scholarship program.
Outreach to Administrators

College Administrators and College Stores

College administrators have a broad range of duties depending on their responsibilities on campus. The college store can be a convenient resource for products and services and a responsive, creative partner on departmental or campus-wide initiatives.

Perceptions of the college store may vary by responsibility; see typical perceptions of specific administrators below. College presidents often understand the store’s public relations role and the ways in which the store can enhance the college’s brand, support its academic mission, and strengthen ties with students and alumni.

Key Messages for Administrators about the College Store

- The college store plays a vital role in the life of the campus and is an indispensable resource.
- We are dedicated to serving the needs of the entire campus community.
- We welcome partnerships with other campus departments.
- We have services and products that can help you achieve your goals.
- The college store should be included in planning for major departmental or campus initiatives.

Administrator Outreach Ideas

Educate

- Regularly update the store’s direct supervisor about store operations and results via meetings, phone calls, e-mails, or reports.
- Schedule periodic on-site store visits for administrators who have responsibility for oversight of the store to show off what’s new or improved in the store.
- Invite administrators to special store events, such as book signings and sales.
- Invite supervisors and administrators to experience the store’s synergy by working for a few hours during rush.
- Reach out to new administrators by inviting them to a newcomers’ reception or mailing them a store-branded “welcome to campus” gift.
- Invite deans, academic department heads, and textbook coordinators to the store for an annual reception with a private savings offer and a free gift.
o Conduct an annual customer satisfaction survey and prepare a summary of the results to help illuminate the store’s value to college constituents.

  o Explain how the store compares to key industry benchmarks.

  o Highlight areas where the store scored particularly well and how the store plans to address areas that need improvement.

  o Send the summary through campus mail with a letter to college administrators.

  o Post the results on the store’s web site.

o Prepare an annual report each year summarizing the ways the store provides tangible and intangible value to the college community. Include dollar amounts for net profits, contributions, in-kind services, and savings (including the amount students saved with used books and buyback).

**Collaborate**

  o Identify campus-wide initiatives where the store can help take a leadership role and volunteer for the steering committee.

  o Offer to host other departments’ events or meetings in the store, if space is available.

  o Inform administrative assistants and meeting planners who support top administrators about the store’s ability to provide meeting materials on short notice, such as binders, note pads, pens, and speaker gifts.

  o Promote the availability of college-branded gifts for administrators to distribute to special guests, speakers, retirees, and departing colleagues.

  o Partner with other campus departments to become a focal point for the delivery of information, products, and services for graduating seniors.

  o Look for opportunities to share effective inventory management methods with other departments.

  o Help other departments promote or sell products or items they create, such as CDs of musical groups.

  o Sell tickets in the store to campus events, such as theater and musical performances, athletic events, or movies.
Work with campus dining services to sell prepared, packaged foods from dining services in the store.

A store with a point-of-sale system and an e-commerce site can offer to share these tools to help administrative departments with online transactions—with the store taking a commission.

**Solicit Feedback**

Host an annual forum with a select group of campus administrators and faculty to share and solicit ideas about programs that can help keep costs down for students, such as a guaranteed textbook policy that requires a book be used for a specified number of terms.

**Support**

Attend campus events and be a visible supporter of college activities.
Additional Administrator Outreach: Business Officers

Business Officers and College Stores

The business officer is responsible for the college’s financial operations and may oversee or control a college store’s operations. On some campuses, the business officer makes the decision about keeping the store independent or leasing the store to a third party.

Business officers want to be able to measure the store’s operations and cost-effectiveness, understand the store’s contributions to the college, and assess how the store is serving the campus community.

Key Messages for Business Officers about the College Store

- We are eager to help you understand how we operate and how we serve the campus.
- We are dedicated to the college’s academic mission and the success of students.
- Our store performs well by standard and industry measures of retailing effectiveness.
- We deliver vital financial support to the college.
- We also provide many other tangible and intangible contributions.

Business Officer Outreach Ideas

Educate

- On a regular basis, provide details of the store’s financial returns to the college via e-mail or a printed summary.
- Invite members of the college business office to a behind-the-scenes tour of the store’s operations.
- Share news of awards or other recognition received by the store from industry organizations.
- Keep the business office informed of the store’s participation in money-saving buying groups and the annual savings achieved.
- Share information gained from participation by the store’s management team in college store industry committees and task forces.
- Periodically share data from NACS and other industry sources supporting the value of independent stores.
Create and distribute a periodic “executive report” to keep campus administrators informed about the business operations of store, trends in collegiate retailing, college store industry benchmarks, business news, and changes in the needs of key constituents that could impact the store and its performance.

Collaborate

Explore opportunities to share the store’s inventory management expertise or retail transaction processing capabilities with the business office.

Solicit Feedback

Create a business advisory committee to provide ideas and feedback to the store regarding its business operations.
Additional Administrator Outreach: Student Life/Student Affairs

Student Life Administrators and College Stores

The student life or student affairs administrator oversees student groups and activities, such as fraternities and sororities, religious and political groups, and service organizations. The student life administrator looks for ways to help student groups improve the effectiveness of their communications, organizing, volunteer recruitment, and participation.

The student life administrator may be unaware of the college store’s ability to provide products and services for student groups and their activities or may be under the misperception that working with the store is difficult or that prices at the store are higher than at other retailers.

Key Messages for Student Life Administrators about the College Store

- The college store is a valuable and convenient resource for products and services for student groups.
- Let’s work together to make it easier for student groups to get what they need to achieve success.

Outreach Ideas for Student Life Administrators

Educate

- Ask to be included as a valuable campus/student resource in the college’s publication for college student or outreach groups.
- Send a personalized letter to each student club and organization outlining the kinds of assistance the store is able to provide and what the store has done for that group in the past.
- Ask to make a brief presentation during training for residential advisors so that they can knowledgeably direct dorm dwellers, new students in particular, to the store for their academic and campus life needs.
- Look for opportunities for student groups to link to the store’s web site and create reciprocal links from the store’s site.
- Each month, invite a different campus organization to create the bookstore window display to promote their mission and/or special event.
Create a simple e-newsletter or series of e-mail updates to keep student organizations informed about store news throughout the year.

**Collaborate**

- Provide meeting space for student organizations in the store, if available.
- Provide event space for student organizations in the store, if available.
- Set up reciprocal links between the store’s web site and student group web sites for student groups that are working with the store on programs or events.
- Help Student Affairs respond to student emergencies, by replacing a student’s textbooks lost in a house fire, for example.
- Enable student groups to order customized apparel and merchandise in smaller quantities.
- Provide materials for hearing- and sight-impaired students.
- If the store has a point-of-sale system and an e-commerce site, offer to help student groups with online transactions—with the store taking a commission.

**Solicit Feedback**

- Invite the student leaders of the college’s Panhellenic or Greek organizations governing board to an annual idea-sharing session to discuss how the store can support their organizations.

**Support**

- Make regular donations of raffle prizes to on- and off-campus organizations and ask the organization for public acknowledgment of the store’s support.
- Donate imprinted merchandise bags for various student group-sponsored campus events.
Additional Administrator Outreach: Admissions

Admissions and College Stores

The admissions office strives to attract prospective students to the college and create a positive experience for students and their families who visit campus. The admissions office looks for ways to engage students in the college’s educational opportunities and help students understand the unique experience offered by the college. The college store can help welcome prospective students to campus, strengthen their affinity with the college, and help students envision a positive college experience.

Key Messages for Admissions about the College Store

- We can help you promote our college to prospective students and deliver a positive and welcoming experience.
- Let’s work together to engage prospective students with the college when they are considering our college or visiting our campus.

Outreach Ideas for Admissions

Collaborate

- Provide college-branded gifts for admissions representatives to distribute to students and guidance counselors when visiting high schools.
- Provide store-branded bags for information materials distributed by college admissions representatives who visit high schools.
- Ask the admissions office for permission to include a store brochure or catalog in the package of materials provided to prospective students who tour the college.
- Request that the admissions office include a visit to the store a part of campus tours for prospective students.
- Provide a coupon for a free gift or special savings offer that admissions personnel can distribute to prospective students who tour the college.
- Provide tee shirts or other college-branded apparel for students and staff who conduct college tours for prospective students.
- Request that a store brochure or fact sheet be included in the pre-registration packet mailed to new students.
o Ask the registrar’s web site to carry a link to the store web site and/or to the textbook page in particular.

o Participate in new student orientation. Use the opportunity to present the store’s location and hours, textbook shopping guidelines, textbook reservation programs, computer programs, refunds and exchanges policies, buyback, online shopping at the store's web site, and employment opportunities.

  o Provide store-branded shopping bags for orientation materials.

  o Provide binders, folders, or printing services for orientation manuals.

  o Invite new students to participate in store tours.

  o Provide welcome goodie bags or door prizes.

**Solicit Feedback**

  o Meet at least once a year with the admissions director or admissions staff to discuss ways the store can support admissions and prospective students
Additional Administrator Outreach: Athletics

Athletics and College Stores

The athletic director is responsible for the college’s athletic program, including recruiting student athletes, fielding competitive teams in collegiate sports leagues, funding the athletic program, and generating fan support. Athletics and college stores sometimes have a competitive relationship: both may be selling college-branded products and apparel to students and fans.

Key Messages for Athletics about the College Store

- We want to help you promote the college’s athletic teams.
- Let’s look for ways to partner on selling merchandise.
- We can help you comply with NCAA rules for student athletes.
- We have retail point-of-sale systems that can help you sell products on site at various locations.

Outreach Ideas for Athletics

Collaborate

- Help promote fan support for sports teams by hosting “Star Player” receptions where fans can talk with players.

- Feature athletes, coaches, and athletic trainers in store apparel or sports gear in print ads that run during major sports seasons.

- Feature athletic coaches in radio and television spots run by the store during collegiate games broadcast on local channels or other sports programs.

- Encourage fan participation by operating an auxiliary ticket sales program in the store prior to major home sporting events.

- Work with the recreational sports department to set up a process for teams in recreational leagues to order tee shirts and other team-branded sportswear through the store.

- Establish an exclusive concessions sales agreement with the athletics department.
**Solicit Feedback**

- Meet at least once a year with the athletic director or staff to discuss ways the store can support athletes and the athletic department.

**Support**

- Run the athletic department’s textbook scholarship program.

- Manage the athletic scholarship course materials transactions for NCAA compliance with the compliance officers’ assistance and manage the buyback process at the end of each semester for the athletic department.

- Provide a special debit card system for scholarship athletes.

- Sponsor recreational sports events throughout the school year.

- Provide marketing support by purchasing advertising in printed programs or signage at sports venues.

- Support the athletic department by sharing proceeds from “team shops” set up at major sporting events throughout the year.
Outreach to Alumni

Alumni and College Stores

Most college graduates fondly remember shopping at the college store when looking back on their college experience. While the cost of textbooks may be top of mind for some alumni, many hold the store in high regard and look forward to visiting the store when they return to campus. Alumni also shop at the store’s web site for college-branded apparel and other merchandise. College stores want to develop relationships with alumni to help them enjoy and celebrate their lifelong relationship with their alma mater.

Key Messages for Alumni about the College Store

- We are your lifelong connection to your college.
- We have the products and services you need to celebrate your pride in being a graduate of your school.
- Your support of the college store benefits current and future students and academic programs.
- Come to our retail store when you’re on campus or visit our online store anytime.

Alumni Outreach Ideas

Educate

- Write a letter or guest column for the alumni magazine detailing ways in which the store helps alumni stay connected to their alma mater: insignia merchandise, special events, receptions, bulk discounts for alumni clubs, reunion weekend celebrations, etc.

- Write a letter or guest column for the alumni magazine updating alumni on today’s college store and explaining how the store helps support the institution and saves students money.

- Submit news releases to the alumni magazine about store events, alumni and faculty author appearances, and other news of interest to alumni.

- Set up a store page on popular social media sites such as Facebook.com, MySpace.com, or LinkedIn.com to communicate with alumni.

Collaborate

- Provide a coupon for a free gift or special savings offer for alumni who visit the store at homecoming or reunions or at other times during the year.
o Ask regional chapters and “class of” groups from the college’s alumni association to link to the store’s web site from their own sites and provide a reciprocal link to their sites in return.

o Feature “then” and “now” photos of alumni in public spaces in the store during homecoming and reunion weekends.

o Negotiate total exclusivity in direct marketing of retail items to alumni in exchange for providing a share of the gross profit to the alumni affairs annual budget.

o Host off-site sales of college-branded apparel and merchandise at alumni events with a share of the profit to the chapter or alumni association.

Solicit Feedback

o Implement an annual online survey to gather alumni feedback and suggestions for products and services.

o Meet at least once a year with the alumni director or alumni relations staff to discuss ways the store can support alumni relations.

Support

o Employ alumni at all levels of the store’s operations.

o Advertise in the alumni association magazine to support the association’s programs for alumni.

o Give a percentage of annual ring commissions for class ring sales to the alumni association.