

URI Campus Store
Courtney McGrath & MacKenzie Petrucci
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Summary by Sydney Venditti

As alumni of the TMD program at The University of Rhode Island, both Courtney McGrath and MacKenzie Petrucci have made valuable contributions to the URI Campus Store as students and as full-time employees. There are many internship opportunities for students working at the Campus Store including: Accounting, Film & Media, Graphic Arts, and Buying. Using knowledge obtained through the TMD program at URI, McGrath and Petrucci have contributed to the success of the Campus Store despite declining sales due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the shift to online learning.

During her senior year at URI, MacKenzie Petrucci completed an internship at the Campus Store. During this time, she focused on improving the buying and tracking of merchandise using SKU numbers. Through her implementation of SKU numbers, the store was able to track sales data based on logo, color, and size. This allowed buyers to make more educated purchasing decisions. Prior to this, employees were tasked with taking manual inventory of the sales floor and stockroom. Petrucci's implementation of SKUs allowed employees to save hours of time while also improving buying.

The URI Campus Store is known for its Box & Carry program, which provides students with course materials each semester. In previous years, the store would process around 5 thousand orders of course materials per semester. Today, the store processes only 2 – 3 thousand orders per semester over the course of 4 – 6 weeks. Decreases in sales in recent years are due to the introduction of open educational resources, which provide free materials to students. Despite the decline in sales, the Box & Carry program is still a great resource for students. With the introduction of virtual learning, foot traffic in the store also heavily declined. Because of the increase in available resources and the decrease of students on campus, the Campus Store focused on other areas to generate revenue.

Recently, The Campus Store has had opportunities to make significant changes to align with new market demands. On top of the essential changes made due to the pandemic, the social climate of the country sparked massive changes within the store. Courtney McGrath spoke to many students looking for ways to better represent them and the University as a whole. In response, the Campus Store added new and inclusive categories of merchandise such as: BLM t-shirts, LGBTQ rainbow Rhody t-shirts, and also clear masks for those with hearing disabilities.

The effects of the pandemic created a ripple of negative impacts on the store. While all physical locations were forced to close, the online store remained open. With more time than ever before, the stores were able to be cleaned and reconfigured, while the online store was updated with new merchandise. In addition to making the store safe to open, the pandemic allowed for a completely new merchandise category: masks. With the help of current TMD student, Shelby Kanski and local company, Soft As A Grape, the Campus Store was able to sell 6 of her personal designs in stores and online. Since March 1st alone, over 400 of Shelby's masks have been sold, helping to create a new stream of revenue for the store. By using knowledge and skills learned through the TMD program at URI, both McGrath and Petrucci have made extremely valuable improvements to the Campus Store by optimizing its functionality, adding inclusive merchandise and increasing student representation.