

North Dakota University Systems Gets Creative with Nelnet Storefront

In Brief:

- In 2022, North Dakota University Systems (NDUS) went live with Nelnet Campus Commerce after being with the same payment vendor for over a decade.
- Many institutions in NDUS have been using Nelnet Storefront in a variety of unique and creative ways.



Ready for a Change

After over a decade of partnership with another payment solution vendor, North Dakota University Systems (NDUS) was ready for a change. In 2021, they began the process of searching for a new vendor who had the skills and technology to accommodate all 11 of their institutions, which includes six universities (two are research institutions), and five community colleges. Some challenges they needed to resolve involved having all campuses using a single ERP, which caused extended connection times when accessing any shared portals, as well as the inability to have any campus-specific customizations. Additionally, they wanted each campus and their various campus departments to have the ability to create and manage their own online stores.

Non-Stressful Go-Live Process

In 2022, NDUS went live with Nelnet Campus Commerce. In about a year's time, Nelnet was able to completely implement all of the payment technology solutions NDUS was interested in. "We had 11 campuses, three different products to implement, and 12 months to do it. It could have felt very stressful," shared Ashley Hanson, Student Financials Business Analyst, North Dakota University Systems Core Technology Services. "Nelnet didn't make it stressful as we had great project management on both sides that really kept us on track," she said.

Implementing Nelnet Storefront

Among the products implemented was [Nelnet Storefront](#). With Storefront, the online store experience designed for higher education institutions, NDUS was able to give their 11 locations what they had been asking for – the ability to set up and manage their own campus-specific online stores with customizable branding, inventory tracking, and reporting capabilities. "Some benefits of having Storefront is it not only allows all of these unique storefronts to exist and gives the departments the ability to create a storefront when needed, but all of the reporting is centralized so I can run reports and manage it all in one location even though other departments are managing the storefronts," explained Shawnia Gertz, Student Finance Coordinator at Bismarck State College.

Taking Inventory of Existing Online Stores

Once Storefront was implemented, each campus got to work organizing their existing online stores. First, they evaluated their current online store setups and condensed where possible. "Our Nelnet implementation manager provided us with some great visuals on how we could organize our various stores, and it ended up working out great," noted Dee Muir, Assistant Director of Campus Solutions, NDUS.

"Everybody likes how they can configure their own branding when it comes to their storefronts as well because it just makes that user experience better," added Hanson.



Creative Ways NDUS Uses Storefront

Many institutions in NDUS have been using Storefront in a variety of unique and creative ways. From selling tickets to collecting non-credit course fees to birthday cake orders, Storefront is being used for more than just selling books and school swag. Here are how two institutions in NDUS are using Storefront to make an impact in their campus:

North Dakota State University

Though North Dakota State University (NDSU) mainly uses Storefront to sell books, collect testing fees, and as a general store, they also sell event tickets. In April 2022, their student government hosted a prom for freshman and sophomore students. They wanted to give these students an opportunity to experience a prom that they didn't get to experience in high school because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Storefront was used to sell tickets to this event and track sales. "I worked with the students to set up the event in Storefront. It was so fun to work with them on this project and get to share the reports with them," explained Carrie Petersen, Assistant Director of Customer Account Services at North Dakota State University.

Bismarck State College

At Bismarck State College (BSC), they too use their Storefront for collecting testing fees. "Students who use Storefront for their testing love that they can create an account and then log right in without having to fill out additional forms. With our last product, this was not possible for them. It really is a timesaver!" explained Gertz.

Along with this, BSC uses Storefront in a variety of fun ways, like:

- **Birthday Cake Orders:** Parents and friends can order students an individual-size birthday cake with a short, personalized message from the school's dining service via their online marketplace. Jessie Savre, Director of Student Financial Services at BSC, said, "It's fun to see how the different departments across campus are utilizing Storefront!"
- **Kudos & Coffee:** This program uses Storefront to allow anyone on campus to purchase a drink from the school's coffee shop and sends an email with the kudos coupon to the recipient(s) for a free drink of their choice. "Nelnet Storefront has given us unlimited options for connecting with people," remarked Gertz.
- **Career Fair:** BSC rents booth space to their yearly career fair using Storefront, which has the ability to track inventory and send notifications. Gertz said, "A positive result I have seen with Storefront is the ability to track inventory. I no longer have to manually count what's left of something and now I get a notification when inventory on a specific item is low. This has been helpful for our career fair and keeping track of the number of booth available to rent."

Becoming More Efficient

Overall, NDUS and its institutions are happy with their move to Nelnet. After implementing Nelnet products, including Storefront, Savre had this to say: "My campus has unlimited options because Nelnet has provided us with a diverse product for our various departments which makes it easy for the finance department to work through their piece quickly and efficiently." She added, "Nelnet Storefront provides our students with a great user experience which we really appreciate!"

Learn more about [Nelnet Storefront](#)

Read other [success stories and testimonials](#) from our higher education partners