

# Breaking Down Clichés: What Service Really Means

How to select a partner that meets the needs of students, parents, and the institution



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**Since most partners promise “great customer service” to the colleges and universities they serve, the term has become something of a cliché. Why does level of service still need to be a top priority for institution leaders when selecting a provider?**

In addition to providing a high-quality educational experience, colleges and universities are also in the business of providing a top-level service experience to their students and parents. In order to ensure a consistent experience, third-party partners interacting with students and parents need to be able to meet or exceed the customer service standards of an institution. The technology bells and whistles of products are exciting, but when a student or parent calls a company for assistance, it is an interaction they have with the customer service team that they remember. And for the caller, that interaction is a direct reflection on the institution itself, not just on the provider.

**Payment providers are intrinsically involved with some of the institution’s most critical operations. What are the hallmarks of the best payment providers in terms of service for this crucial role?**

Students often have high anxiety over paying for their education. So when they submit a payment, it is critical to make sure the transaction goes smoothly.

Institutions are unique; one four-year university may want to process payments completely differently than another university. Some campuses may want to enlist a sole payment provider for one-time remittals, and others want to provide payment plan options. The partner you select needs to understand and respect that uniqueness. A well-informed customer service team will know an institution’s specific situation and be able to respond accordingly when a student or parent from that institution calls. At Nelnet Campus Commerce, we also understand that different

departments within an institution might have different payment rules. We make sure our customer service team asks the right questions to ensure we can best represent our clients.

**As institutions consider different service providers, what resources are available to help them determine the company that will provide the best service?**

The most useful reference is always from a peer. When evaluating a potential partnership, look at the institutions they serve. Talk to leaders at those campuses about the customer service they have experienced and how long they have been with that provider.

**Signs that a payment provider focuses on customer service:**

- Longevity in the industry
- Keeping current with new technology
- Flexibility with ERP and SIS integration
- Commitment to compliance

Customer service is more than a commitment at Nelnet Campus Commerce—it is a culture. We work with each of our associates on providing best-in-class service. It is one thing to promise that, and another to live it.

Nelnet Campus Commerce performs all mission-critical functions in-house, from data entry to customer service to account management. If a company outsources those tasks, it does not have as much control over the output. While others may outsource these functions, further removing your students from your institution, we have maintained control over these services because they are so intrinsically linked to providing a positive experience for our institutions.



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