

AACS schools' convention goes digital

The American Association of Cosmetology Schools hosted its annual convention online last month, without skipping a beat over the traditional in-person annual event. From the keynotes to the breakouts to the exhibit hall with real-time chats, the convention had all the components that are familiar to the more than 200 AACS members who attended.

Public Relations, Social Media Marketing and Government Relations are key initiatives.

“Our ‘Don’t Cut Us Out’ campaign is putting our students’ success stories in front of Congress and the Department of Education,”

explains outgoing AACS President **Michael Halmon**. “Our goal is to collect 1,000 videos to help everyone understand that cosmetology is a career of choice.”

Michael’s Congressman, **U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL)**, checked in to say, “I’m committed to fighting for vocational education. It lifts up millions while strengthening our communities across the nation.”

AACS also celebrated multiple successes on the government relations and executive fronts. Members:

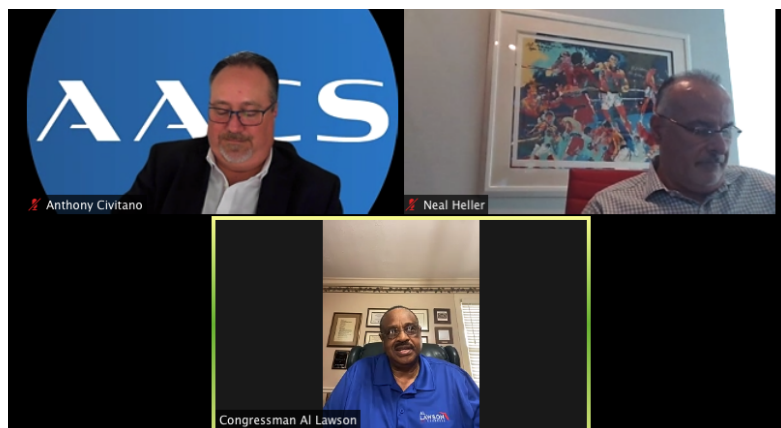
- Overturned Gainful Employment and put AACS on the map of policymakers

- Successfully advocated for CARES Act funding for schools/students against strong efforts to exclude our schools

- Sent strong letters to Congressional leadership on additional COVID-19 funding, followed by dozens of individual calls with House and Senate offices

- Were included in CARES Act media coverage without harmful consequences

Democratic **U.S. Rep Darren Soto (FL-09)** stopped by to share his support.



AACS Executive Director Anthony Civitano and Government Relations Chair Neal Heller welcome U.S. Rep Al Lawson, a Democratic representing Florida’s 5th Congressional District. Said Rep. Lawson, “We know that your industry has the undivided attention of your clients in your salons and barbershops, and we like to get our hair done. When we spend money for education, we need to make sure we take care of the people who take care of us.”

“My mother was a beautician for many years and the primary breadwinner in the family for the first 10 years of her marriage, because my dad was in the Navy,” he said. “Becoming a beautician was a big part of the American Dream for her. I want you to know that I appreciate your industry stepping up



Keynote “Shark” Daymond John shared his passion for achieving success as an entrepreneur, while Fox News personality Pete Hegseth helped the AACS Government Relations Committee raise more than \$150,000 to help grow industry awareness and advocate for cosmetology school students on Capitol Hill.

your public health and safety protocols during the pandemic.”

Keynote **Marcus Buckingham** focused on resilience. “Humans fear the unknown, so your challenge as a leader is to turn that anxiety into resilience through stories and anecdotes.



The more changes you experience, the more resilient you are,” he shared.

Keynote **Daymond John**, entrepreneur and star of *Shark Tank*, told members, “Life is purely what we negotiate. First you must build influence. Second, you must add value to the other person. Third, you must honor that relationship.

The best way to get what you want is to understand the other person’s point-of-view and be empathetic.”

The convention was produced by **Katherine Frank Creative**, which has produced AACS’ events for over 10 years.

“When we realized that in-person shows were not going to happen, we pivoted and teamed up with partners we already had established relationships with to create a

virtual platform that would bring AACS events, including the CEA Convention for cosmetology school educators and the AACS Annual Convention, onto a virtual platform,” says **Kathy Cacciato**, co-owner of KFC. “We know the AACS exhibitors really well, and were able to manage their needs in the virtual exhibit hall.”

Going forward, Kathy expects events to take a hybrid online/offline approach, due to safety concerns and to reach a larger audience. For help with your events, contact **Marissa**

Hohner, vice president of sales and marketing for Katherine Frank Creative, at marissa@katherinefrank.com.

For more information about supporting AACS school owners, their teachers and their students, visit www.beautyschools.org.