



THE CURRENT

KACRAO'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

KACRAO has truly meant the world to me throughout my higher education career. It's the place where I've met lifelong friends, the kind who challenge me, cheer me on, and show up when I need them most. I think many long-time members would agree that KACRAO becomes more than a professional network; it becomes a community. And for those who are newer to the organization, I hope your KACRAO journey brings you the same support, connection, and encouragement. No matter where your path leads in higher education, I hope you find colleagues who become trusted friends you can lean on along the way.

Recently, our Executive Council gathered for a one-day retreat at Friends University to reflect on where we've been and, more importantly, where we're headed. A clear theme emerged: membership engagement. Everyone in the room shared how getting involved in KACRAO not only deepens your connection to the organization but also elevates your impact on your campus and strengthens your advocacy for our profession as registrars and admissions officers.

So, here's my friendly plea for the upcoming year: get involved!

And the good news? It's easier than you might think.

Start by simply asking someone already active in KACRAO for ideas on how you might plug in. Then hop over to www.kacrao.org/committees to explore a list of committees that could use your talents. If something sparks your interest, reach out to the committee chair listed on the site. Most committees require around an hour a month, some even less, and a few may pick up a bit as we approach the annual conference. There's something for every schedule and skill set.

Speaking of the conference, mark your calendars now for the 2026 Annual KACRAO Conference in Manhattan, KS, September 23-25, 2026. It's always a fantastic opportunity to learn, grow, and network with colleagues from across the state. And wouldn't it be incredible to see the whole room stand when we ask who volunteered their time to support KACRAO in 2025-2026? Don't wait — jump in and join us!

Eric Sanford, KACRAO President

K A C R A O

2025-26 Executive Council

President-Elect & Program Chair: Kyle Stacken, Fort Hays State University

Past President & Awards and Accolades & Nominations and Elections

Chair: Brandi Brenner, University of Kansas Medical Center

Vice President for Association Services & Membership Chair: Melissa Conley, Wichita State University

Vice President for Outreach: Andrew Bohn, Cowley College

Vice President for Professional Development: Terri Van Slyke, University of Kansas Medical Center

Secretary: Kendra Grizzle, Sterling College

Treasurer: Casey Wallace, University of Kansas

Treasurer Elect: Renee Olson, University of Kansas

Admissions Advocate-At-Large: Devan Flegler, Emporia State University

Records/Registration Advocate-At-Large: Brette Hankin, Colby Community College

COORDINATORS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Apply Kansas Liaison: Brenda Carmichael, Flint Hills Technical College

Corporate Liaison: Tana Cooper, Barton County Community College

Historian/Constitution: Chad Steinkamp, Wichita State University

Planning for College: Marissa Nuss, Fort Hays State University

Technology: Michelle Ponce, University of Kansas Medical Center

Audit Committee: Melinda Roelfs, Pittsburg State University

College Planning Conference Committee: Amy Morris, Neosho County Community College

Local Arrangements Committee: Barb Wells & Eric Chace, Kansas State University

Publications Committee: Krysti Yuen, Butler Community College

Scholarship Committee: Emily Berry, Dodge City Community College

Summer Drive In Workshop: Jilly Michael, Baker University

KACRAO CONFERENCE RECAP

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My first KACRAO experience was one to remember. From hearing people's stories about how they landed where they are to learning helpful tips and tricks for being a road warrior, the experience was both meaningful and insightful. I was especially happy to see how receptive and welcoming everyone was, and it really stood out when I realized how many people were in the exact same boat as me. I truly enjoyed spending time with colleagues from my university as well as connecting with others throughout KACRAO, and I'm looking forward to future annual conferences.

”

Koby McCarty
Emporia State University

1st time attendee:



“

I truly enjoyed presenting at the 2025 KACRAO Conference in Lawrence, KS. It was a great and rewarding opportunity to share a topic I am deeply passionate about while collaborating with Pete Belk from Johnson County Community College. Together, we presented at the New Counselor Workshop, which was especially meaningful to me. It was refreshing and inspiring to meet new counselors who are just beginning their journey—many of them right where I was several years ago. I appreciated the opportunity to connect with them, offer guidance, and hopefully begin mentoring relationships that will continue as we cross paths at future recruiting events, including our CPCs. The experience was both energizing and reaffirmed why I value this work and the professional community we share.

”

Presenter:



Martecia Cooper
Butler Community College

KACRAO CONFERENCE MEMORIES



2025 CPC Season

WYNTER COLSTON

As 2025 comes to a close, our road warriors finally have a moment to reflect, recharge, and relax. After three busy months on the circuit, the KACRAO travelers have more than earned some well-deserved R&R—along with the opportunity to look ahead to what the new year has in store.

The journey kicked off in Kansas City on September 15, as fellow road warriors set out to attend (or attempt to attend!) 40 scheduled and sanctioned college planning conferences across the state. As with any travel season, a few bumps appeared along the road. Some host sites had to cancel—McPherson High School due to a particularly challenging situation, and others because of unforeseen calendar changes. These moments prompted valuable reflection and thoughtful consideration for future improvements.

Decisions about circuit adjustments are guided by feedback received by CPC Chair Amy Morris through post-season evaluations and additional communication channels. With the insight and support of this year's CPC Committee, several fairs will shift to different weeks or time frames in hopes of improving scheduling flexibility and attendance.

Using StriveScan data, Garden City, Cherryvale, and Fredonia emerged as the fairs with the strongest attendance-to-registration ratios. While this may surprise some, the percentages tell an encouraging story. Across all StriveScan fairs, we recorded 13,884 registrations and 7,326 attendees—numbers that do not include participants who did not register through StriveScan.

Looking ahead to 2026, CPC Chair Amy Morris shared an important reminder from the representative perspective:

“As a rep myself, I know we must look at travel budgets and assigned territories. However, it takes 2–3 times seeing and chatting with a school for a student to truly connect the dots on who you are and what your institution offers. I highly recommend expanding your reach, if possible, and attending all sanctioned fairs within a travel week. While some reps skip fairs due to ‘low interest,’ repeated visibility matters—and some years are stronger than others. If you’re already investing in a hotel or gas, you might as well attend the fair.”

In alignment with this philosophy, the CPC Committee expanded high school invitations this year so that every school was invited to two to three fairs. This approach was well received, as it allowed schools greater flexibility with calendars and schedules while ensuring students had meaningful exposure to postsecondary opportunities.

Overall, 2025 proved to be a strong and productive year on the circuit. Our road warriors are energized by the lessons learned and excited to see what 2026 will bring—for our colleagues, our institutions, and most importantly, our students

2026 KACRAO CONFERENCE INFO



Visit the KACRAO Conference page for details and updates at kacrao.org/kacrao-annual-conference





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for
reading!*



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