



THE CURRENT

KACRAO'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024

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FROM 1960 TO 2024

BY MELISSA FARMER

The 2023 KACRAO Annual Conference was hosted on September 20th through the 22nd by Washburn University. Highlights include the Conference Service Project, Little Libraries, and around 40 interesting sessions to attend. On Thursday, dinner and entertainment was hosted at Happy Bassett Barrell House. Thank you to Local Arrangements, Program Committee and Washburn University for hosting this year!

Did you know that one of the first KACRAO Annual Conferences happened in 1960? This conference was hosted by the University of Wichita now known as Wichita State University. The president at the time was Thelma Book who represented Wesleyan University! Since then, conferences have been hosted by the following institutions: Kansas Wesleyan University, University of Kansas, McPherson College, Kansas State College of Pittsburg now Pittsburg State University, Emporia State University, Sterling College, Southwestern College, Washburn University, Hutchinson Junior College now Hutchinson Community College, Fort Hays State University, Sacred Heart College, Bethel College, Emporia State University, Johnson County Community College, Kansas State University, Kansas City Kansas Community College, Dodge City Community College, Washburn University, KCTI, Garden City Community College, Barton County Community College, Butler County Community College, and Colby Community College.

In 2015, KACRAO had eight amazing colleges host the conference together. This included Bethany College, Bethel College, Hesston College, Central Christian College of Kansas, Kansas Wesleyan University, McPherson College, Sterling College, and Tabor College. In 2020, we didn't let Covid stop us from bringing our wonderful KACRAO members together. The conference held its head up high and had a Fall Virtual Series conference.

Don't forget to register for the upcoming 2024 KACRAO Annual Conference hosted by Dodge City Community College!

MEET YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Hello, KACRAO!

Have you ever wondered what made your Executive Council members want to be a part of KACRAO and KACRAO's Executive Council? We've got you covered!



From your KACRAO President, Hugo Perez, "A member of KACRAO since 2001, I have had the opportunity to see how our leadership helps shape the organization. Seeing how people like Heather Eckstein, Melinda Roelfs, Joey Linn, Pete Belk, and Aaron Hamilton led the organization was inspiring. In my time in KACRAO, I've served in many capacities within the organization, including CPC Chair, LAC Chair, Historian & VP for Professional Development. Many seasoned veterans approached me about stepping up to the plate and taking on the presidential leadership role. While I had been hesitant to take on such a role previously, I knew it was indeed my turn to step up. I was reassured that I made the right decision at this past Annual Conference in Topeka when many of the people I look up to in the organization took the time to give me words of advice (H. Perez, 2024)".



Brandi Brenner, your President-Elect, attended her first KACRAO Annual Conference in 2018. She was a fresh regional recruiter at this time and felt like she had nothing to contribute to the conference. "2019's conference was hosted in Wichita. Being based there, I attended, thinking it would be my last conference, and I'd use what was gleaned from there to go about my business. However, I did sign up for a couple of committees (B. Brenner, 2024)." During the world shutting down in 2020, KACRAO persisted through virtual activities. Brandi's first role in KACRAO leadership was Planning for College Coordinator. Brandi stated, "I didn't set out to be a member of the Executive Council so much; I just wanted to make a positive contribution to grow and expand the organization, increasing its impact throughout the membership and the State of Kansas." Like many, her President-Elect position came from saying 'yes' and being volun-told into numerous roles. "Through my involvement in KACRAO, I've learned about different facets of higher education and grown my leadership ability and professionalism. More so, participation in KACRAO (on all levels) has given me a network of deeply connected individuals within the profession (B. Brenner, 2024)." Aside from serving on committees, facilitating roundtables, and presenting at multiple conferences, Brandi's involvements include Planning for College Coordinator, VP of Outreach, VP of Association Services and Membership Coordinator, and President-Elect.



Brenda Carmichael, your Past President! "KACRAO and the connections I have made over the years inspired me to give back to the organization. When I was asked to take on a role of VP of Association of Services, I gladly accepted the nomination. That opened the door to become President. Over the years I have served and chaired several committees. Each role I have served with KACRAO has helped me grow professionally and personally. Do not hesitate to get involved, grow and learn more about KACRAO and higher education (B. Carmichael, 2024)."



From your KACRAO VP for Professional Development, Eric Sanford, "The connections with others in the field and it has exceeded my expectations (E. Sanford, 2024)."



From your KACRAO Treasurer, Ramie Nation, "Getting involved with KACRAO has brought some amazing opportunities, including building a network of friends and colleagues who are incredibly supportive. Being a part of the executive council is not only a chance to give back to the organization, but also a way to increase connection and understanding of everything our organization does (R. Nation, 2024)."



From your KACRAO VP of Outreach, Brandon Burke, "Joining KACRAO's Executive Council brings many opportunities for leadership. No matter what your role is, this has been a great opportunity to accomplish different tasks and events. Joining KACRAO has presented many opportunities to learn more about myself and create goals and strengths in higher education. Overall, there is much to be gained from KACRAO's Executive Council, being a part of this AMAZING team has let me grow as a person and professional. No matter where your journey takes you in higher education, look for ways to get involved in KACRAO (B. Burke, 2024)."

KACRAO

2023-24 COORDINATORS AND CHAIRS

Coordinators

Historian/Constitution: Kristen Allen, Butler Community College

Technology: Megan Chambers, Kansas State University

Corporate Liaison: Michelle Ponce, University of Kansas School of Medicine

Planning for College: Corbin Strobel, Hutchinson Community College

Membership Coordinator: Samantha Garcia, Garden City Community College

Chairs

College Planning Conference Committee: Amy Morris, Neosho Community College

Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chair: Emily Witherspoon and Michelle Richardson,
Dodge City Community College

Publications Committee: Melissa Farmer, Salina Area Technical College

Scholarship Committee: Melissa Conley, Wichita State University

Summer Drive-In Workshop Committee: Denise Hoeffner, Salina Area Technical College

Audit Committee: Tana Cooper, Barton Community College

KC Metro College Expo Committee: Teresa Hill, Kansas City Kansas Community College

Apply Kansas Chair: Marissa Nuss, Fort Hays State University

Strategic Plan Committee Chair Ad-Hoc: Lynnette Hilty, Hutchinson Community College

New KACRAO Workshop Committee: Eric Sanford, Friends University

*What's
Next?*

Did you have a favorite session you attended at the KACRAO conference? How are you implementing what you learned from the session into your work? You can be in the next KACRAO newsletter by submitting a brief summary to melissa.farmer@salinatech.edu!

2023 AWARDS, ACCOLADES, & RETREATS



EV KOHLS AWARD: DR. ALAN BEARMAN, WASHBURN UNIVERSITY

BETH TEDROW AWARD: BRANDI BRENNER, PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

DIANE BARNES AWARD: LORI CROWTHER, BARTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

RICHARD N ELKINS AWARD: TANA COOPER, BARTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

LAURA CROSS AWARD: TAMMY TABOR, GARDEN CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

GAVEL AWARD: BRENDA CARMICHAEL, FLINT HILLS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION: STEVE LUOMA, WASHBURN UNIVERSITY & LORI GIBBON, NEWMAN UNIVERSITY







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