



THE CURRENT

KACRAO'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

WHAT'S INSIDE:

KACRAO Conference Info

Letter from the President

KACRAO Kernal: New to KACRAO?

Cell Phone Policies

2026 KACRAO Conference

September 23-25, 2026

**Hilton Garden Inn Conference Center
Manhattan, KS**

Registration and hotel information can
be found at:

<https://www.kacrao.org/kacrao-annual-conference>



2026 KACRAO ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SEPT 23-25 | HILTON GARDEN INN | MANHATTAN

Manhattanhappiness

Letter from the President

Eric Sanford, KACRAO President

Hello, KACRAO Family!

Well, somehow, here we are. It feels like just yesterday that I was standing in front of everyone saying, "I'm honored to serve as your President." And now I'm writing my final President's message for the KACRAO newsletter. Apparently, someone forgot to tell the calendar that I needed more time!

It has been quite a year. Serving as your President has been one of the great privileges of my professional career. I have had the opportunity to work alongside an incredible Executive Council, Coordinator, Committee Chairs, and volunteers who have given their time, energy, ideas, and, let's be honest, a whole lot of extra hours to KACRAO.

Organizations do not become strong because of one person. They become strong because people are willing to show up, roll up their sleeves, share an idea, take on a project, answer one more email, jump on one more Zoom call, and occasionally say, "Sure, I can help with that."

That is KACRAO!

I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together this year, but I am even more proud of the people who made it happen. Our organization continues to be one that other state and regional organizations look to because of our willingness to collaborate, our commitment to higher education, and, perhaps most importantly, the relationships we have built with one another.

For 66 years, KACRAO has been more than an organization. It has been a place where professionals become colleagues, colleagues become friends, and friends become the people you can call when you have absolutely no idea how to fix whatever Banner decided to do that day. That sense of community is what makes KACRAO special.

As I finish my year as President, I want you to know how thankful I am for each of you. Thank you for being a member. Thank you to your institutions for investing in KACRAO. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, presented, attended a webinar, served on a committee, answered a question, welcomed a new member, or simply showed up and participated.

You are KACRAO. And I hope you realize just how important that is.

I am not saying goodbye to KACRAO. I'm simply moving from the President's chair to the next seat in the room. I look forward to continuing to serve this organization, supporting those who lead it next, and seeing where the next 66 years take us.

But before we get too far ahead of ourselves, there is one important thing left to do...Let's celebrate!

I cannot wait to see everyone in Manhattan, Kansas, September 23-25, for this year's annual conference. If you haven't registered yet, what are you waiting for? Come join us for a few days of learning, networking, laughter, catching up with old friends, making new ones, and celebrating another great year of KACRAO. You don't want to miss it!

As I write this final message as your President, I am reminded that leadership is never really about the person holding the title. It is about the people who surround you, encourage you, challenge you, and help you make the organization better than you found it.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Thank you for trusting me.

And most of all, thank you for being the KACRAO family.

I'll see you in Manhattan!

Eric Sanford

KACRAO President



Thank Yous from the President

Thank you to the 2025-2026 Executive Council, Coordinators, and Chairs

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

Past President: Brandi Brenner, University of Kansas Medical Center

VP of Association Services: Melissa Conley, Wichita State University

VP for Outreach: Andy Bohn, Cowley Community College

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

Secretary: Kendra Grizzle, Sterling College

Treasurer: Casey Wallace and Renee Olson, University of Kansas

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

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

Apply Kansas Committee Chair: Brenda Carmichael, Flint Hills Technical College

Corporate Liaisons: Tana Cooper, Barton Community College; Brenda Carmichael, Flint Hills Technical College; Michelle Ponce, University of Kansas Medical Center

Historian/Constitution Coordinator: Chad Steinkamp, Wichita State University

Planning for College Coordinator: Marissa Nuss, Fort Hays State University

Technology Coordinator: Michelle Ponce, University of Kansas Medical Center

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

Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs: Barb Wells and Eric Chace, Kansas State University

Publications Committee Chair: Krysti Yuen, Butler Community College

Scholarship Committee Chair: Emily Berry, Dodge City Community College

Summer Drive-In Committee Chair: Michele August, Central Christian College of Kansas

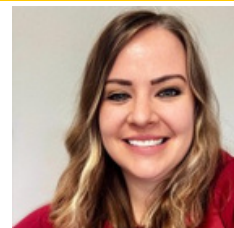
Audit Committee Chair: Melinda Roelfs, Pittsburg State University



KACRAO Kernel: New to KACRAO? Keep reading...

BY Terri Van Slyke

KACRAO Vice President for Professional Development



Welcome to KACRAO!

In the seasonal words of Mariah Carey, **"IT'S TIMEEEEE!"** I hope you are as excited and ready to attend the KACRAO Annual Conference in the Little Apple as I am.

My first KACRAO Annual Conference was in 2006 in Hutchinson. I was barely a year into my admissions career at Kansas Wesleyan University. When I was told I would be attending this work conference, I wasn't quite sure what to expect or what value it would bring. Looking back, I had no idea that one conference would introduce me to lifelong colleagues, trusted mentors, and a professional network that would support me throughout my career.

Throughout my professional career, I have attended many conferences, and KACRAO remains one of the very best. Why? Because the people here genuinely care. Every seasoned KACRAO member was once a first-time attendee, sitting exactly where you are now. We understand what it's like to walk into a conference unsure of who you'll meet, where to go, or how to make the most of the experience. That's why you'll find a community eager to help you navigate the profession, navigate the conference, and most importantly, feel like you belong.

Let me give you a little preview of the KACRAO fun that awaits you. You'll gain valuable knowledge from interest sessions, discover new ideas to bring back to your campus, and build relationships with colleagues who understand the unique challenges and opportunities of our work. Don't be surprised if you leave with a few new friends (and maybe a door prize) along the way.

If this is your first time attending KACRAO, please allow me to share a few tips to help make your conference experience both successful and memorable:

ATTEND THE "NEW" SESSIONS

If you're new to KACRAO or new to the profession, these sessions are designed specifically for you. They are a great way to learn, ask questions, meet colleagues, and gain insights that will help you thrive in your role.

New KACRAO Workshop

Presented by: New KACRAO Committee

Intended for first year or newer Registrar and Admissions professionals, this introductory session will give you an overview of KACRAO, its services, and our affiliation with AACRAO. Additionally, it's a great time to meet the other new professionals and get some tips on how to be outstanding in your position. Bring your business cards or contact information to share with each other.

Date: Wednesday, September 23

Time: 2:45 – 3:30 p.m.

Location: Kings A

New Counselor Workshop

Presented by: New KACRAO Committee

Intended for first year or newer Admissions Professionals, this session is about life in the Admission Office. Meet other new Admission Professionals, learn good practices for recruitment, discuss questions you may encounter, and how to handle them.

Date: Wednesday, September 23

Time: 3:45 – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Kings A

KACRAO Kernel: Continued

New Registrar Workshop

Presented by: New KACRAO Committee

Intended for newer professionals in the registrar's office, this introductory session will give you an overview of KACRAO. You will learn about various topics and issues within the Registrar's office.

Date: Wednesday, September 23

Time: 3:45 – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Kings B

MEET PEOPLE

I cannot emphasize this enough: attend the social activities! Some of the most valuable moments at KACRAO happen outside the meeting rooms.

Don't be shy. Introduce yourself to someone you don't know. Sit at a different table. Start a conversation. KACRAO members love to share ideas, learn from one another, have fun, and build lasting relationships.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

If several people from your office are attending, make the most of your conference experience by splitting up and attending different sessions. Take notes, gather ideas, and share what you've learned with one another. It's easy to stay within your comfort zone but challenge yourself. You may discover a new approach, resource, or strategy that benefits your entire campus community.

ATTEND THE TOWN HALLS AND ROUNDTABLES

In my opinion, these sessions are some of the most valuable conversations you'll have all week. Town halls and roundtables provide a unique opportunity to discuss challenges, exchange ideas, and learn from colleagues at institutions like your own. Whether you're looking for solutions, reassurance, or fresh perspectives, you'll find them here.

TALK TO THE VENDORS

We are fortunate to have a variety of vendors participating in the conference who are eager to share information about their products and services. Even if you aren't the person responsible for making the decision of what vendors you partner with, take time to visit with them. Ask questions. Explore what's available. You may discover a tool, service, or idea that could greatly benefit your institution.

So, there you have it. You now have the tools to make the most of your first KACRAO Annual Conference.

Most importantly, in the wise words of Ted Lasso, "Be curious, not judgmental." Be present and willing to connect with others. The knowledge you gain is valuable, but the relationships you build may be what you remember most.

We can't wait to welcome you to KACRAO.

Safe travels,

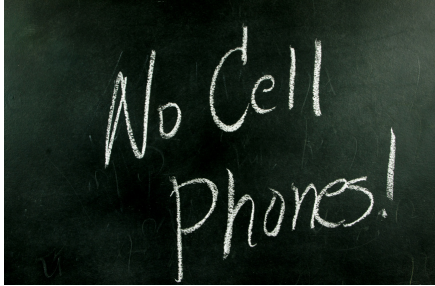
enjoy your time in the Little Apple,

and we'll see you in Manhattan!



Kansas Schools' Cell Phone Policies

By KACRAO Publications Committee



Kansas school districts had to implement new cell phone policies this year due to new Kansas Legislation. Many districts require students to keep cell phones and other personal electronic devices turned off and securely stored and inaccessible throughout the school day, with specific storage methods and consequences varying by district. Policies range from keeping phones in lockers, backpacks, or vehicles to checking them into the school office, with escalating consequences for repeated violations. The primary reasons for these restrictions are to reduce distractions, improve academic focus and engagement, limit disruptions and social-media conflicts, and create a healthier learning environment for students.

USD 259 Wichita Public Schools: enforces a strict "bell-to-bell" personal electronic device ban across all schools

USD 385 Andover Public Schools: Devices must be turned off and stowed away (in a locker, vehicle, or backpack) from the morning arrival bell until dismissal at 3:00 PM. They are not allowed during lunch or passing periods.

USD 233 Olathe Public Schools: Students are encouraged to leave devices at home. If brought to school, devices must be turned off and securely stored in a school-issued locker, designated storage area or another location designated by administration.

USD 512 Shawnee Mission School District: Bell-to-bell prohibition on using or accessing personal electronic devices. Students can leave phones at home or in their vehicle. Students may also use a school-issued locker or cubby for storage. Policy covers more than phones—including smartwatches, tablets and wireless earbuds.

Hayden Catholic High in Topeka: Will be enforcing the no phone rule with exceptions for those with medical needs like glucose monitoring.

Dodge City High School: "If the district did not issue the device to you, it is not allowed inside the school building. This applies to all classrooms, passing periods, lunch, and restrooms

Emporia High School: During the school day, cell phones, smartwatches, tablets and wireless earbuds are to be turned off and stored away while on district property. Limited exceptions include IEP, 504 plans, or if approved by a licensed physician as medically necessary. Students can use a personal device during school-sponsored events, activities, and/or programs that take place before or after the regular school day, following district guidelines and staff direction.

#KACRAO Voices

Got something to celebrate at your institution?
A win, a resource, or a wellness tip worth
sharing?

 Send it our way at kyuen@butlercc.edu and you
might see it featured in next month's newsletter!



Follow us on
Facebook
[@KACRAO.KS](https://www.facebook.com/KACRAO.KS)



Follow us on
Instagram
[@KANSASACRAO](https://www.instagram.com/KANSASACRAO)



Check out our
website
www.KACRAO.org



Follow us on LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com/company/KACRAO