



# THE CURRENT

## KACRAO'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2025

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings KACRAO,

As I reflect on this past year serving as your KACRAO President, I am truly proud of the collective accomplishments of our Executive Council, Coordinators, and Chairs. Together, we have advanced the goals of KACRAO's Strategic Plan 2029, enhanced organizational transparency, expanded member engagement through virtual roundtables and professional development opportunities, and responded to the evolving needs of our association.

These successes would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the 2024-2025 Executive Council, Coordinators, and Chairs. I encourage each of you to get involved with KACRAO in some way. Please join me in recognizing and thanking these individuals for their outstanding contributions.

**Past President:** Brenda Carmichael, Flint Hills Technical College

**VP for Association Services:** Allie Hammack, Manhattan Christian College

**VP for Outreach:** Andy Bohn, Cowley College

**VP for Professional Development:** Pete Belk, Johnson County Community College

**Secretary:** Marissa Nuss, Fort Hays State University

**Treasurer:** Casey Wallace, University of Kansas

**Treasurer Elect:** Casey Fraites-Chapes, University of Kansas

**Admissions Advocate-at-Large:** Kyle Stacken, Fort Hays State University

**Records/Registration Advocate-at-Large:** Sheila Markowitz, Emporia State University

**Apply Kansas Committee Chair:** Brandon Burke, Cowley College

**Corporate Liaison Coordinator:** Lynnette Hilty, Hutchinson Community College

**Historian/Constitution Coordinator:** Chad Steinkamp, Wichita State University

**Technology Coordinator:** Michelle Ponce, University of Kansas Medical Center

**CPC Committee Chair:** Amy Morris, Neosho County Community College

**LAC Chair:** Matt Skirven, University of Kansas

**Publications Committee Chair:** Wynnter Colston, Neosho County Community College

**Scholarship Committee Chair:** Melissa Conley, Wichita State University

**Summer Drive-In Committee Co-Chairs:** Jilly Michael, Baker University and Barb Wells, Kansas State University

**Audit Committee Chair:** Brette Hankin, Colby Community College

Thank you again, to our leadership board, and everyone who served on committees and engaged with KACRAO this year. It has been an honor and privilege to serve along side you! See you at KACRAO 2025.

Brandi Brenner  
KACRAO President

# CPC DO'S AND DON'T'S

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The College Planning Conference (CPC) system is the formal college fair program in Kansas. KACRAO sponsors a committee (CPC Committee) which coordinates the system. These guidelines are intended to benefit the students, parents, hosts, and representatives attending these sessions. The attending institutional representative should observe the following guidelines

1. You must follow the Statement of Good Practices which has been approved by KACRAO and KCA.
2. **Maintain the highest level of personal and professional conduct, including professional attire.**
3. Remember you are the guest. Make all confirmations and cancellations in advance. All participants must register in advance through the CPC Chairperson/Committee. Hosts are not required to accommodate walk-ins to the CPC. **Arrive early** to set up and you must stay until the program is over. The location of your room/table may be pre-assigned. Do not ask to be relocated. Everyone takes their turn having the best location. Review the weekly travel summary for event and parking information. Leave visitor parking at event sites for those who may be visiting the site for reasons OTHER than the College Planning Conference.
4. Do not bring students, cadets, or other non-professionals to the CPC's.
5. **Give-aways are not permitted.** This includes all representatives attending each fair. This may include but is not limited to universities/colleges, military representatives, community members, and business representatives. You may hand out brochures, catalogs, view books, information request cards, business cards, or anything else containing factual information. Do not hand out advertising gimmicks such as shopping bags, bumper stickers, buttons, pennants, posters, or flowers. No pictures of prospective students are allowed for promotional purposes and remember to confine all recruitment activities to your designated area. **No representatives should stand in front of/beside the table unless the event setup prevents you from standing behind the table.**
6. Transactions involving the exchange of money are prohibited, as are contests, drawings, or lotteries of any kind.
7. Audiovisual equipment is not allowed in browsing or commons areas. Only those schools with individual rooms can use this type of equipment. Call ahead of time if you want permission to use the host school's equipment.
8. Electronics (ex. - tablet or laptop used for event attendees to enter contact information instead of completing a handwritten contact card) are allowed at CPC's as long as they are battery operated and sound is NOT used.
9. **Tabletop billboards or displays used in the browsing area are limited to 36" above the table.** Larger floor displays are not allowed unless at a portioned college fair. Do not, at any time, block the view of another representative.
10. Your attendance at the CPC will be publicized through the host school. **You are not allowed to buy publicity in the news media and/or high school papers/high school electronic banners or scoreboards.**
11. KACRAO members: Before accepting an invitation to a college fair (an event with more than one college attending) during the CPC schedule that isn't listed on the schedule you must: 1) refer the prospective host to the CPC Chairperson to have the program approved, 2) call/email the CPC Chairperson to see if the proposed program fits under the guidelines of the CPC Committee. KACRAO member institutions are prohibited from attending any programs not approved by the CPC Committee.
12. It is the responsibility of the CPC host to make sure all institutions follow the Guidelines. Infractions will be reported to the KACRAO Executive Council. Institutions with repeated infractions may be prohibited from attending future CPCs.

# ***What does Professionalism Mean in KACRAO?***

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BY: WYNNTER COLSTON

The definition of professionalism refers to the conduct, attitude, and behavior of an employee that demonstrates competence, respect, integrity, and responsibility. This includes aspects like appropriate appearance, effective communication, punctuality, meeting deadlines, and upholding ethical standards.

In an organization like KACRAO we pride ourselves on our dedication to getting students to some form of education after the high school diploma. Our recruitment strategies fall anywhere from bright smiles and bold pop ups to sparkling pompoms and a bright color of slacks. These are all great ideas but occasionally become more hindering than helpful. When working in the schools and attending events, it can be challenging to distinguish between the youthful, eager admissions counselors and the juniors and seniors, as their appearances often are similar. Dressing in a more polished and appropriate manner not only reflects your commitment to your role but also enhances the overall feeling of respect the students get when hearing about your school. Additionally, arriving on time demonstrates respect for both your responsibilities and colleagues, ensuring that events can start on time and look even more put together than they feel. It is important to maintain a high standard of professionalism in both appearance and punctuality.

In conclusion, professionalism encompasses conduct, attitude, and behavior that reflect competence, integrity, and respect. While KACRAO's efforts in recruitment are creative and engaging, there are instances where the casual appearance of admissions counselors can create confusion with students. Adopting a more polished and professional appearance, along with consistently arriving on time, can reinforce respect for both the role and the audience. By maintaining high standards of professionalism, we ensure a more effective and impactful representation of our organization.

## **NOT PROFESSIONAL**



## **ACCEPTABLE**



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**September 24-26th, 2025**  
**Double Tree By Hilton,**  
**Lawrence KS**

**REGISTRATION  
STILL OPEN!**

**2025 KACRAO  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE**



**September 24-26, 2025**  
**DoubleTree by Hilton**  
**Lawrence, KS**

## Schedule At-a-Glance

### **Tuesday, September 23, 2025**

7:30 p.m. - 10 p.m. Informal Gathering at Lawrence Beer Co.

### **Wednesday, September 24, 2025**

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Registration & Info Booth Open

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Pre-Conference Session: "Enduring: The Power and Practice of Purposeful Leadership" with Zach Mercurio.

1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. Opening Session - Welcome & Business Meeting

1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. Keynote Address - Zach Mercurio

2:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Interest Sessions, Corporate Partner Fair and Breaks

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Dinner and Entertainment hosted at Venue 1235 - shuttles provided

### **Thursday, September 25, 2025**

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Registration & Info Booth Open

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Interest Sessions, Corporate Partner Fair, Town Halls, Breaks

11:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Lunch / Business Meeting

1:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Interest Sessions, Corporate Partner Fair, Breaks

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Past President Reception

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Dinner & Entertainment Out in Downtown Lawrence on Massachusetts St. - shuttles provided. \*Note - meal not provided by the conference. Guides will lead groups to various restaurants.

### **Friday, September 26, 2025**

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Registration & Info Booth

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Round Tables, Interest Sessions and Breaks

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Closing Speaker - Dr. Cameron Piercy

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Closing Business Meeting



## **Service Project: Ballard Center Donation Drive**

KACRAO's annual conference service project for 2025 will support the Ballard Center, a 501(c) non-profit organization that partners with individuals and families to achieve stability through early childhood education and needs-based services in Lawrence and Douglas County.

All conference participants are encouraged to bring donation items, which will be collected at the conference registration area and delivered to the Ballard Center at the conclusion of the conference on Friday.

Nonperishables, diapers, and miscellaneous hygiene products are in high demand.

All conference attendees who contribute a donation will receive a raffle ticket for a prize to be raffled at the conference closing session on Friday.



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE -WHAT TO EXPECT

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Don't be alarmed, Brenda Carmichael WILL hug you!  
(& we love her for it)

**You should join a committee! Yes, YOU!**

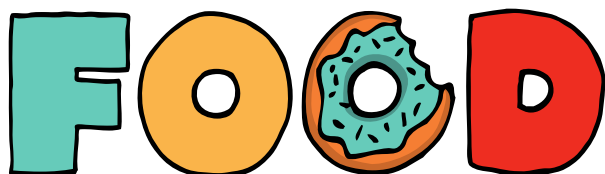
*Come  
join  
us!*



Tons of networking opportunities!  
You might even find your new BFF!  
Or at least your Exit Buddy

KACRAO Professional development is off the charts. This year we have some stellar guest speakers as well as presenters.

*learn*  
**SOMETHING**  
*- new -*  
**EVERYDAY**



The food is always top tier, \*chefs kiss\*, and we know how to eat.

Hang time - You can always find some quality time to spend with your team and new pals throughout the week.



# Headed to Conference?

Don't forget to download our app for real time updates and the full Annual Conference schedule in the palm of your hands! The KACRAO Events app is available in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.



If you prefer the PDF version, feel free to download it from the KACRAO website under "Annual Conference".

## What are you most looking forward to?

"I love professional development so conference is one of my favorite times of the year. In addition, this year I have gotten to take bigger opportunities in KACRAO Leadership and will be presenting a session for the second year in a row!"

"Getting hang-time with my favorite travel season peeps!"

"Seeing all the new baby KACRAO faces, networking with everyone, and just overall calm before the storm of Travel Season."

"Brenda's hugs!"

"The business meeting"

## Upcoming in 2025

**APPLY KANSAS DAYS**

October 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025

*Dream.* **EXPLORE.**



**APPLY KANSAS**  
College Application Month

#ApplyKS



# #KACRAO ShoutOuts

Have something going on at your institution you would like to share? Maybe a wellness tip or advice you think your fellow KACRAO members might benefit from? Please share it with us by emailing [KACRAO@kacrao.org](mailto:KACRAO@kacrao.org) and we will share it in the next issue!



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