



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Only confirmed sessions appear. Titles, presenters, and descriptions are subject to change.

Sessions are listed alphabetically. A schedule will be released at a later date.

*If you would like to make a change to your session, please email Hannah Haage at communication@rmacac.org



A collaborative approach to College Access for Indigenous Students from Rural and Reservation High Schools across Arizona

Natalynne Rogers | Arizona State University, Abby Tudor | Northern Arizona University, Dan Kellish | University of Arizona

Recruiting Indigenous students requires strategies that address practical barriers to access while honoring the cultural needs of students and their communities. Meeting students where they are—both figuratively and literally—is essential to this work. Join us for a discussion on how Arizona's three public universities collaborate on an annual statewide tour of tribal communities, building relationships and raising awareness about college opportunities.

A Competency-Based Model and its Implications for Counselors

Mike Dunn | Eagle Rock School & Professional Development center

The movement for competency-based education is quickly progressing around the country. Led by organizations such as the Aurora Institute and Mastery Transcript Consortium, this movement captures student learning in new, innovative, and authentic ways. This session gives a glimpse into the community-based effort we've taken at Eagle Rock school to develop a new competency-based model. It showcases the process, the in-progress model, and ongoing potential for growth. The session will engage audience members in small groups to explore where competency-based efforts have the potential to take hold in school communities, and how counselors can take steps to spearhead the necessary changemaking efforts to launch this work.

A+ Hosting: Tips on Hosting College Fairs and College Visits at Your High School

Kylie Rigdon | University of Tennessee, Justin Duval | Oklahoma State University

Plan a fair. Post visit availability on [insert your preferred scheduling platform here]. Welcome colleges to campus. Sounds simple enough, right? Right? This session will include a list of dos and don'ts for hosting colleges to your high school for visits and fairs. Are you looking to improve what you've already got going? Looking to amp it up and be the "favorite" visit of the year for colleges? Or are you trying to figure out where to start? No matter! This session promises to deliver ideas and inspiration as well as what no longer works from the perspective of two seasoned road warriors with more than 40 years of combined experience.

Access = Affordability

Erin Cummins-Roper | Animas High School, Hillary Dickman | Colorado College, Heather Daniels | Colorado State University

College access is about more than simply getting in. Participants will gain an understanding of how institutions' financial aid policies align with a mission to drive college access. High school counselors will learn how to determine which institutions demonstrate a commitment to access through their financial aid policies and how to use that information to better advise their low-income students. Finally, high school counselors will obtain practical tools for helping their students and families to understand and compare financial aid award letters through a financial aid case study that uses sample financial aid award letters and a comparison tool.

Accessing Professional Development through Advocacy, Networking, and Low Cost Options

Brooke Gabrielli | Cherokee Trail High School, Shondra Carpenter | Cherokee Trail High School

In this interactive session, participants will explore no-cost and low-cost options to access professional development, engage in professional organizations, and network within college admissions. Participants will walk away with a wealth of resources to access and implement. We will explore how professional development, professional organizations, and networking are all intertwined to maximize student access. Lastly, we will discuss tips and tricks to advocate for funding and attendance at professional development.

BEE Proactive: How to guide students in engaging with the college search beyond the application

Nicole Fratto Garcia | Trinity University, Sarah Morissette | Dawson School, Macaela Holmes Fuller | Peak to Peak Charter School

The college search process can be overwhelming, but it offers numerous opportunities for students to engage in meaningful exploration beyond just filling out applications. Helping students approach their college search holistically can empower them to make informed decisions about where they will thrive academically, socially, and personally. Hear from colleges and high schools about what they are doing in their own communities to make the list-building come alive.

Bee Resilient: Empowering First-Time College Students Through Life Coaching and Strengths-Based Development

Gabriela Holt | Rio Salado Community College

Discover how Rio Salado Community College is transforming the first-year college experience with an innovative program offering free Academic Life Coaching to first-time students. This engaging session will showcase how life coaching, distinct from counseling, academic advising, and success coaching, is a game-changer in fostering student growth and success. Join us to explore the intersection of life coaching and strengths-based development, and leave inspired to help students (and yourself!) unlock their true potential.

Bee-yond Borders: Building a Global Hive in Counseling Practices

Tara Murphy | London Metropolitan University, Emma Schwartz | James Cook University, Bridie Troy | University College Dublin, Dr. Jill Corbin | The Good Doctor: Prescribing Bright Futures

Join us to explore the benefits of integrating international education into your counselling approach, opening a world of opportunities for students. Pursuing a degree abroad offers diverse academic pathways, potentially lower tuition costs, access to the global jobs market, robust healthcare and reputations for safety. Exposure to different cultures enhances personal growth and career readiness, equipping students with essential skills for today's ever-changing world. Learn practical tools like navigating UCAS and international admissions, leveraging global networks like AIRR-NA, and accessing international counsellor tours. Gain insights from universities in Australia, Ireland, Singapore, and the UK, plus Dr. Corbin's counsellor perspective.

Behind the Decision: Using Case Studies to Navigate College Admissions

Lisa Hanson | Seton Hall University, Gina Wright | Seton Hall University, Melissa Lustig | The Meadows School

Case studies are an invaluable tool for demystifying the college admissions process. This session will explore the value of using real-world scenarios to guide students, families, and educators in understanding the complex factors behind admissions decisions. Attendees will learn how to coordinate, develop, present, and analyze case studies illuminating critical elements such as: academic profiles; extracurricular impact; and institutional priorities. Whether you're an admissions professional, counselor, or educator, this session will equip you with actionable strategies to engage your audience and empower students to make informed choices about their college journey. Let's transform insight into understanding together!

Bilingual Spanish Recruitment: Benefits, Challenges and Opportunities

Jon Lindeman | Colorado State University

Bilingual Spanish recruitment has obvious potential benefits for interested institutions: navigating demographic changes and enrollment trends; promoting new and diverse backgrounds and perspectives on campus; and, most fundamentally, oftentimes simply being a worthwhile pursuit for its own sake. These benefits can often conflict with long-standing realities of Admissions access and outreach: public perception of higher education, concerns around cost and community, English language requirements for many post-secondary programs, among others. This presentation combines admissions and enrollment data, formal linguistics, demographics, and stakeholder collaboration to propose best practices and stimulate ongoing discussion around this complex but vital topic.

Building Bridges: Supporting Executive Functioning & Emotional Intelligence in Admission

Sarah Morissette | Dawson School, Jake Sisco | Convent & Stuart Hall, Jen Gagne | Colorado School of Mines

Today's students are navigating an era of heightened anxiety and the pressure of "never enough." This session will explore how executive functioning and emotional intelligence play a critical role in the admissions process and overall student success. Featuring the perspective from a STEM-focused university, the panel will discuss strategies for recognizing and supporting these skills in applicants, particularly through letters of recommendation. Panelists will also highlight institutional efforts to foster these abilities, helping students thrive both academically and emotionally.

Buzz-Worthy Programs: Streamlining Visits and Empowering Students

Coral Azarian | Rowland Hall, Jesse Chavez | Rowland Hall, Vivian Murphy | Rowland Hall, Rachel Brague | Rowland Hall, Clair Hersch | Rowland Hall

Have you ever wondered how to support a revolving door of college admissions reps while still having time to meet with individual students and maintain office workflow? Come hear from three student leaders and their college counselors to learn more about innovative office programming that provides both opportunities to enhance leadership experiences for students while growing your fall visit program.



Buzzing Across the Pond: Exploring International College Options

Brad Baertsch | Arizona State University

Exploring university options across the pond can be a great way to minimize years for a degree and cost. This session will delve into the exciting opportunity of pursuing higher education abroad, specifically highlighting Arizona State University's innovative and collaborative three-year engineering program at its London campus. Counselors will learn about international college options and how the three-year degree can be accessible. This session will provide valuable information on the benefits of studying abroad, application processes, and how to support students and families in understanding creative ways to seek degrees that are transferable to the US and explore best fit international options. We will also highlight the unique features of ASU's accelerated engineering program in London, including its rigorous curriculum, world-class faculty, and cultural immersion opportunities.

Buzzing with Creativity: College Options for Artistic Minds

Dee Voss | The New School

This session is designed to empower aspiring artists, dancers, musicians, film makers, fashion icons and designers. We will delve into a variety of college and university options specifically tailored to creative fields, including fashion, art, architecture, film, acting, design, and theater. Our expert panelists will provide invaluable insights into the unique requirements, audition processes, and crucial deadlines that aspiring artists must consider. Attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of how to build a strong portfolio, craft compelling personal statements, and successfully navigate the college application process.

Buzzing with Efficiency: How Alumni and Parent Volunteers Can Help Your Office Thrive Like a Hive

Nicole Fratto Garcia | Trinity University, Sarah Morissette | Dawson School

As higher education and nonprofit organizations face increasing pressures to do more with less, alumni and parent volunteers have emerged as a valuable resource in creating efficiencies and supporting team members. This session will explore how effectively engaging volunteers can help alleviate workload strains, streamline operations, and enhance organizational outcomes. Join us to learn how to build and manage successful volunteer programs that align with your office's strategic goals. We'll discuss best practices for recruiting, training, and managing alumni and parent volunteers, ensuring they are both motivated and equipped to make meaningful contributions.

Buzzing with Efficiency: Using AI to Bee Impactful

Michelle Rasich | Rowland Hall, Diane Campbell | Liberty Common High School, Randy Mills | Greenhill School

This session will introduce college counselors to the transformative power of efficiency tools—particularly AI-driven resources. In a work world buzzing with new responsibilities and demands, counselors are often challenged to manage responsibilities with limited time and resources. This session will show you how AI and digital tools can automate routine tasks, assist with data analysis, and suggest content ideas for everything from emails, to building college lists, to policy drafting. Join us to explore how working “smarter, not harder” with the right tools can create a more efficient counseling program and help you “Bee Impactful” in your counseling program.

Climbing the Admissions Leadership Peak: An Interactive Workshop

Ken Anselment | RHB

Ken Anselment will lead an interactive discussion and workshop, using his book, *Climbing the Admissions Leadership Peak: Lessons from the ALP*, as a guide to essential questions to ask at each step of your leadership climb: approach, ascent, and summit.

Collaborative Approaches to Recruiting Students with Disabilities: A Round Table Discussion

Juliette Bryant | Colorado State University

Students with disabilities often face unique challenges when considering post-secondary options and universities. They may lack examples of peers navigating accommodations or support services, and their parents or supporters—used to being highly involved—might struggle to step back. These dynamics can lead to tough, sometimes overbearing, questions during the admissions process. Join us for a roundtable discussion on how admissions professionals and counselors can effectively support and empower students with disabilities! Prepare for an honest, thought-provoking conversation that explores strategies to foster inclusivity and understanding.

College Knowledge Challenge: Increasing IEC & School Counselor expertise in partnership to better serve our students

Lauran Williamson | Williamson College Prep, Linsey Vesceri | East High School

In this interactive session, participants will test their knowledge of U.S. colleges and universities through a fun Kahoot game. This session is designed to not only entertain but also educate school counselors and independent educational consultants on fun facts, unique traditions, and distinctive academic programs at various institutions. By boosting their college knowledge, counselors can spark students' interest and provide more informed guidance throughout the college admissions process. In the second half of the session, we will hear from a public high school counselor and an IEC on how to best partner to keep our college knowledge fresh and current to best serve our students in an ever changing world of college admissions.

Current Trends in Honors Education and their Impact on Admission to (and Success in) Honors Programs and Honors Colleges

Dr. Richard Badenhausen | Westminster University

Dr. Richard Badenhausen, past president of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and co-chair of the NCHC committee that designed the new national honors standards, will discuss the latest trends in honors education that may influence how students approach applying to honors programs and colleges. Significant changes include moves away from a “perks”-based paradigm of honors education rooted in historical practices of elitism and exclusion towards models that emphasize access and inclusion. Editor of the recently published monograph “Honors College in the 21st Century,” Badenhausen will also share highlights of a data set for 160+ honors colleges across the U.S.



Evaluating Bias in the College Admissions

David Ferree | Colorado State University

College Admissions Staff are the gatekeepers to higher education, and if we don't examine the biases we perpetuate, consciously or unconsciously, we can reinforce barriers that disproportionately affect students of color. This session will explore the ways bias can appear in college admissions, examine how we can change our recruitment practices to be more inclusive, and reflect on hiring practices to assess multicultural competency.

Hidden College Costs

Julie Mitchell Varriale | UCLA Extension

Think the Cost of Attendance (COA) you see on financial aid award letters covers all the costs your students and their families will encounter in college? Think again!

How a Recruitment Plan Comes Together

Michael Gulotta | University of Colorado Boulder, Amanda Johnson | University of Colorado Boulder

Is your Admissions office rethinking its approach to recruitment? Are you a high school counselor wondering how Admissions offices form their recruitment strategies? Come hear from recruitment leaders at CU Boulder to learn how they refocused their recruitment strategy to reach more students and account for challenges that loom on the horizon.

James is Jimmy; Sam is Sally Take Two: What to do when you don't have answers - a round table discussion

Jen Gagne | Colorado School of Mines, Sarah Morissette | Dawson School

This impactful session is back again, this time for a round table dialogue. Last year we discussed how to best support students who are applying to college while navigating their gender identity and name change. This year's post-election environment has created some unease and we have even more questions without answers that need to be discussed. Join us for a session where we'll discuss how to support all students in the high school to college transition, especially those whose rights may be at risk.

Let's Talk Beyond the City Limits: Rural Recruitment 101

Cindy Hoang | Colorado State University

Rural communities face unique challenges in post-secondary education, including limited resources and cultural concerns about leaving home. This session explores effective practices for engaging rural students and families, dispels common misconceptions about higher education, and shares strategies to support their success. Join us to better understand and address the needs of rural populations while fostering pathways to higher education.

NACAC's Guide to Ethical Practices in Admissions (GEPCA) and Why it Matters

Valentina Rojas Gutierrez | Westminster University

GEPCA represents the long-standing commitment that admissions professionals and counselors have to students as they participate in this process. Although GEPCA is not an enforcer of practices, understanding the ethics behind the profession allows us to be fair when assisting students and their families.



Navigating DEI Across Divergent Landscapes: A Roundtable Discussion

Jenifer Ziegenfu | University of Colorado Boulder, Blake Trujillo | University of Colorado Boulder

As diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies face both advocacy and opposition across the U.S., colleges and universities must navigate this shifting terrain. This roundtable offers a space to share strategies and challenges in addressing DEI in regions with varying legal and cultural contexts. Participants will explore creative solutions for advancing DEI goals in states where it's supported and adapting practices in states where DEI efforts face restrictions. We'll exchange insights, build adaptive strategies, and ensure inclusivity remains central to organizational success, regardless of location.

Preparing Students for the College of Tomorrow: Emerging Trends in Higher Education and Strategies for Successful Transitions

Dr. Manya Whitaker | Colorado College

In this presentation, Dr. Manya Whitaker, Interim President of Colorado College and Professor of Education, provides a comprehensive overview of the cognitive, emotional, and academic tools students need for successful transitions to college and beyond. We will examine current trends in higher education, including the growing importance of interdisciplinary studies and emphasis on skills over traditional degrees. College counselors and admission professionals will come away with strategies to both prepare and identify students who have a love of learning and the vital executive functioning skills to thrive in an evolving higher education landscape.

Reaching Across the Desk: How Admissions and IEC's Can Partner

Katie Cannon | University of Oregon, Adrienne Loveland | University of Wyoming, Jen Rause | Rause College Counseling

In this session we will discuss how professionals in Admissions and Independent Education Consultants can break down the barriers and find ways to connect and share information across the desks so that we can support one another throughout all parts of the admissions cycle. There is so much focus on the relationship between High School Counselors and Admissions that often the Admissions/IEC relationship is overlooked, but there are so many opportunities for collaboration that we are excited to explore.

Ready to Rise: Professional Development Essentials for Future Admissions Leaders

Brittany Baker-Brousseau | University of Utah

There are a large number of admissions counselors who are well-seasoned but not yet at the management level. They are talented, engaged, and dedicated to college admissions, and they are eager to put in the work to advance within their current office and/or the admissions field more broadly. This pre-conference is an interactive workshop meant for those who have a few years of experience under their belt but who do not supervise professional staff or make policy decisions. We will explore the skills and accomplishments hiring directors want to see, learn from those who have made the journey from admissions counselor to associate director and higher, and develop our knowledge of our own professional strengths and goals to support not only our own growth but the growth of our beloved field.



Recruiting and Supporting First-Generation Students

Char Crear | Westminster University

First-generation students are one of the fastest growing groups of students pursuing a college education currently. Through collaborative efforts with Admissions, Westminster's first-generation student programs increased applications by double the amount this past cycle. In this session, college admissions professionals will gain insight on first-gen specific recruitment and outreach efforts that led to record enrollment numbers for the program. We will also discuss the importance of first-gen programs to the recruitment of first-gen students overall.

Refocus and Reenergize: Business Practices to Find Your "Why" As An IEC

Katherine Price | College Mindset

This session takes IECs through several exercises to refocus and reenergize their practices. The presentation will cover three steps to help the participants refocus, including developing a clear marketing message, identifying their ideal customers, dissecting their customer experiences, and determining the customers they don't want to work with. Next, the session will review three business practices to reenergize IECs and their companies, including determining their value proposition, reevaluating their brand, and redefining their pricing. Participants will leave the session with multiple resources, including videos, articles, self-assessment tools, and eight worksheets to help them apply what they learn.

Relationship-Driven Recruitment: Building Trust

Allison McNally | University of Arizona, Carey Eskesen | The Gregory School

This presentation explores effective collaboration to build trust among students, counselors, and admissions representatives, enhancing recruitment to selective college programs. Attendees will gain practical strategies to foster meaningful partnerships that help high schools cultivate strong applicants and enable admissions counselors to build robust applicant pools. Topics include strategies for maintaining open communication, aligning recruitment goals with student needs, and designing transparent, collaborative initiatives that prepare students for selective admissions. The session provides actionable insights for guiding motivated students seamlessly from application to enrollment, empowering them to succeed and creating a positive and lasting impact for both students and institutions.

Student Programming 101: Selective and Accessible Recruitment strategies that align with your schools value proposition

Andrew Magaña | Colorado State University, Luke Contreras | Colorado School of Mines

Hear from Colorado School of Mines and Colorado State University recruitment reps about best practices in student programming, high school visits, and student/family reach out. We consider cost of attendance, institutional missions, and office limitations.



Syncing Social Media & Admissions in the Recruitment Process

Ailica Cole | University of Wyoming, Hannah Downey | University of Wyoming

Gen Z practically lives on social media so why not meet them where they are at? At the University of Wyoming, we have spent the last few years creating a seamless process to create a print, physical and matching digital voice to connect with prospective students. In this session, you can discover how admissions and social media teams can collaborate to create social media content that strives to impact a student's decision in the college search process. This session will explore approaches to initial collaboration conversations, strategies for alignment, fostering strong partnerships, and enhancing your institutions reach across platforms.

The College Admissions Beehive: Top 10 Trends and How to Bee Informed

Adrienne Loveland | University of Wyoming, Ralph Figueroa | Albuquerque Academy, John Marfield | University of Utah, Kim Medina | Colorado Mesa University

Are you a college admissions counselor seeking innovative approaches to enhance your recruitment efforts and student engagement? Join us for a dynamic panel discussion featuring industry experts who will delve into the top 10 current trends shaping the college admissions landscape. We will review how to BEE efficient at high school visits and fairs, Buzz with life, work balance, and how to Bee ethical in our admissions practices. Panel will share current trends and topics in admissions and how to navigate your work with intention and efficiency. Participants will hear about an advanced professional development opportunity next summer in Colorado.

The Smackdown on Education Policy

Nick Grenoble | Waterford School, Valentina Rojas Gutierrez | Westminster University

Get ready for the ultimate smackdown of legislative policy! Step into the ring as The EdSec Enforcer locks horns with The Legislative Leviathan in a no-holds-barred bout over the state of modern education legislation! Will reform rise victorious, or will special interests land the final pin? Buckle up—because education policy is on the ropes, and the stakes have never been higher! LIVE at RMACAC '25!

Tips to bee impactful in your role

Kim Medina | Colorado Mesa University, Valentina Rojas Gutierrez | Westminster University

Are you interested in visiting with impactful leaders in the world of Admissions? Join us for a panel of inspirational leaders willing to share their ups and downs in leadership. This panel will be structured to inspire, empower and provide practical tools for both new and experienced admissions professionals to enhance their leadership roles and make lasting contributions to their institution.

Trauma-Informed Admissions Practices: What Already Exists and What Could Be

Shannon Cron | St. Olaf College

Research shows that most college students have experienced trauma—85%, according to one study (Frazier et. al, 2009). It follows that trauma impacts the college application process, from affected grades, to essay topics, to the stress of an acceptance/rejection dichotomy. As a result, admissions professionals need to approach their work through a trauma-informed lens, yet almost no scholarship about that exists. This session explores what trauma-informed admissions practices could entail. Pulling from trauma-informed student affairs and mental health counseling practices, eight key themes are presented. Through a series of scenarios, attendees will practice applying these themes in admissions-specific ways.

Unlocking Potential: Best Practices for Guiding High School Seniors Through Competitive Multi-Phase Scholarship

Joanne Augustine | Daniels Fund, Michael Escontrias Salas | Arrupe Jesuit High School

This session will share strategies from experienced counselors in guiding high school seniors through the Daniels Scholarship application process, including techniques that can be applied to any other competitive multi-phase scholarship. Attendees will learn practical tips for each phase of the process, emphasizing comprehensive preparation and support. The Daniels Scholarship is a tremendous opportunity for students with strong character, ambition, and leadership potential. This session includes sharing best practices, providing actionable strategies, and discussing the role of counselors in motivating and supporting students.

Vision to Reality: Launching TheDream.US Scholarship Program at UA and NAU

Rafael A Meza | University of Arizona, J Michael Cruz | Northern Arizona University

The recent launch of TheDream.US Scholarship Program at the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University highlights the discussion on recruitment challenges, fostering funding solutions, and tailoring campus support for undocumented and DACA college students. Attendees will hear of best practices from each campus, including UA's approach to supporting a commuter scholar population and NAU's holistic financial assistance model. Join us as we share lessons learned, strategies for overcoming obstacles, and the vital need for institutional commitment to support all students regardless of status.

We Don't Deny Students?!: How Universal Admissions Removes Barriers

Hannah Haage | Northern Arizona University, Abby Tudor | Northern Arizona University

In 2023 Northern Arizona University debuted the Universal Admissions program, aimed at increasing access to higher education for students across the nation. Students who do not immediately meet the requirements for admission at NAU, have the option to choose a partner community college to begin their college degree, with the assurance that they will be able to transfer into NAU without completing another application once they are ready. Join us to learn about this amazing program, and to think about the implications for your students engaging in the college search or the feasibility of creating such a program at your institution as we all seek to increase access to post-secondary opportunities

Widening the Circle: Broadening your campus visit population

Patrick Ronay | Villanova University, Katie Cannon | University of Oregon, Hannah Murphy | Knox College

Learn of different visit initiatives beyond the campus tour that have attracted new populations to campuses. Attendees will learn effective methods for reaching underrepresented groups, from both near and far. The presentation will cover potential collaborative partners, virtual options, and more. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas to enhance recruitment efforts, broaden access to campus resources, and ensure that more prospective students have an opportunity to experience campus life firsthand



You Can Do it! How to bee an impactful leader in your School, Community, Region, and Nation!

Damien Bracey | Valley Vista High School, Dr. Jill Corbin | The Good Doctor: Prescribing Bright Futures, Diane Campbell | Liberty Common High School, Craig Whittgrove | Cherry Creek High School, Constance Lumumba-Perez | Phoenix Country Day School

Learn from five veteran college counselors, all of whom have experience in affiliate leadership, school district leadership, national committee leadership, and service on college advisory boards. Discover their journeys and what inspired them to pursue leadership, and gain tips and tricks on how to make an impact in your communities. Several members of the panel have unique leadership experiences, be ready to pick their brains!

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Due to an overwhelming number of educational session submissions this year, we will be offering a limited number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The following SIGs will be offered at the 2025 RMACAC Annual Conference: Asian & Pacific Islander, Black & African American Diaspora, CBO, Community College & Transfer, LatinX, Learning Differences, LGBTQ+, Native, Public School Counselor, Rural, Women Empowering Women. If a SIG is not offered for your interest, we hope you will connect throughout conference activities with colleagues amongst your interest groups, and attend other related educational sessions.