



PACRAO NEWS

Summer Blog Post by:
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AACRAO Leadership Meeting Washington D.C

June 20th – 24th 2018

Growing up in Cypress Park Los Angeles born from Mexican immigrants, I spoke Spanish as my first language as many in my community did. I had lots of family around me and I lived a very simple life. I enjoyed my childhood playing sports with cousins who just lived a few blocks away and many neighborhood friends. Both my mom and dad worked long hard hours, my dad working as a roofer till this day. My mom worked 10-12 hour days in a textile company in downtown Los Angeles, all done to provide us the “American Dream”.

Academically I struggled in high school, and had no motivation to continue in school. My Mom received a call from my high school letting her know that I had not been attending school, this was during my junior year. My mom found me at the park playing handball and hangout with people older than me and according to my mom had nothing good to offer me. I was given the ultimatum, go back to school or find a job and contribute to the family. I found a job and dropped out of high school.

Fast forward 25 years, I now have a Master’s Degree in Public Administration, Nonprofit Management from the University of Nevada Las Vegas and a Bachelor’s degree in Public Administration Law Enforcement from Nevada State College. In my early 30’s I decided to go back to school and educate myself. Not just because of the opportunities that education can provide me and my family but to also do my part to assist my community. Specifically lower income individuals who need help navigating the complexities of modern systems, processes, protocols and policies that guide this country.

Now, here I am in Washington D.C. June 20 - 24 at the AACRAO Leadership Meeting and AACRAO Hill Day, representing the professional organization I am privileged to be a part of, PACRAO. During my trip I had the opportunity to go to Capitol Hill and speak to specific legislators regarding higher education policy. I never in a million years would I have imagined this opportunity for me. There I was, a Hispanic male from Los Angeles, a high school dropout, with no one in his family who ever attended college. Now, with a Master Degree in hand and 14 years of higher education experience, I had the opportunity to speak to United States legislators regarding higher education policy in the United States. The experience and professional development gained and achieved in the few days at the AACRAO leadership meeting were special and invigorating. I felt positive about my career and excited. I was happy to be an example of how higher education has provided for my family and has provided me with job growth, development opportunities and now a trip to Washington D.C. with the AACRAO leadership team and the participation in AACRAO Hill Day.

The Thursday started like any other conference day, breakfast at 7am, coffee, catching up with colleagues. Then it hits you, as soon as you open the folder with your name on it. You see the agenda, you have talking points, you have the bios of legislators you will be meeting throughout the afternoon and you have summaries of current higher education legislation that you will be referencing and provide AACRAO perspective on areas of improvements to legislation. I started to feel a bit overwhelmed but as Mr. William Gil, AACRAO's Government Relations Representative (GR) started his opening remarks, breaking down the day and explaining the preparation that we will undergo, my anxiety was reduced. We were prepared by true professionals starting with Mr. William Gil. He provided the political insights on higher education. We also heard from a representative of the media, Andrew Kreighbaum, federal policy and higher education reporter. He provided prospective on the pressing higher education issues that Congress and the Administration is currently working on.

We had additional higher education discussions with representatives from various Higher Education Associations discussing the latest information on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) as well as provide insights on how to maximize the meetings with Congressional Staff. The panelists were:

- Jonathan Fansmith, Director, Government Relations, American Council on Education (ACE)
- David Baine, Senior Vice President, Government Relations and Policy Analysis, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
- Alicia Diaz, Executive Director of Government Relations, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU).
- Mr William Gil, Director, Government Relations, AACRAO.

After a jam packed morning of information, protocol, and expectations we were ready for our day on Capitol Hill. It was an experience that I will never forget. Walking the halls of congress, seeing the history in the builds I was in. I could not imagine I was in the buildings where the laws of our country are made. My partner for this important day was Mr. Jim Bouse from the University of Oregon. We were privileged to speak with staffers from the office of Sen. Cortez Masto, staffers from the office of Sen Ron Wyden, we met Rep. Dina Tiitus, met with Rep. Peter DeFazio and spoke to staffers from Sen. Ron Wyden office.

The following day continued with a full day of learning and discussion. AACRAO Executive Directed, Mike Reilly started with his opening remarks to kick off the day. He discussed moving into the new AACRAO build soon which was purchased and is across the street from the Russian Embassy. Mr. Reilly also went over AACRAO's strategic plan. We then moved into looking at Core Competency Learning lead by Lauren Ruszczyk, Associate Director for Education Abroad at the University of Maryland. We continued with the small groups, facilitated by Lauren Ruszczyk. The day concluded with a Nationals baseball game an dinner at the ball park.

The following day we had a very moving presentation on Work/Life Balance by Texas Ruegg. This was a very useful and insightful presentation on work life balance that did not leave a dry eye in the room. It is a very touching and a deep conversation on work and life discussion. We looked at student success and how do we define student success. The group took a deep dive into the topic. Is student success graduating? Or is student success finding their way in life? How do you define student success? How does your institution define student success?

We continued and did a split, of participates and I went forward with AACRAO state and regional officers. In our session we discussed and worked on a manual on how to lead and maintain a state and regional organization. Discussions on how to lead a state or regional association facilitated by Texas Rueeg and Jerry Montag. We discussed budgets, training for board positions, software or technology used to sign up for conferences, what apps are used during conference, what programs are used to engage members. AACRAO is working on a manual on how to run and operate a state or regional organization, similar to that of the FERPA guide produced by AACRAO.

All attendee's had a reflections session at the meeting, and we discussed the rules of the Red Rubber Ball. The Red Rubber ball by Kevin Carroll talks about passion and how do we follow our passion and what does that mean.

The week was filled with learning and building up your passion in higher education. AACRAO is moving forward on making improvements in legislation and having a larger roll in assisting state and regional organization become more robust. Anyone who has the opportunity to participate in an AACRAO committee or continue to support your regional and state organization would be strongly encouraged to continue to do so. Our work is important and meaningful for students, and our organizations are critical to maintaining consistency in higher education, and being innovative in solving higher education issues.

AACRAO Strategic Plan

Goals and Objectives

1. Prepare AACRAO members to successfully lead their institutions in meeting the challenges of a continually evolving environment.
 - a. Establish core competencies for professionals in academic and enrollment services.
 - b. Provide relevant programming and services to AACRAO members and other higher education professionals.
 - c. Strengthen our focus on compliance, technology, research services and training for the membership.
 - d. Continually evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of programs and services provided by AACRAO.
2. Identify, develop, and promote professional standards in academic and enrollment services.
 - a. Identify standards that are critical to the profession and to the membership.
 - b. Establish a set of desirable best practices topics.
 - c. Develop professional standards and best practices that significantly impact our profession.
 - d. Serve as a resource on key industry topics.
3. Advance AACRAO's leadership in federal higher education policy development and advocacy.
 - a. Identify public policy issues for direct involvement, and develop plans of action.
 - b. Engage the membership in public policy dialogue and understanding.
4. Promote student access and success, and affordability of higher education.
 - a. Create alignments with other education professional organizations that promote student success in higher education.
 - b. Engage in relevant activities that support student access and success, and affordability in higher education.
5. Ensure that the Association is structured to promote sustained growth and member engagement.
 - a. Develop administrative capability to engage members in the life and work of the Association through various communication technologies.
 - b. Continue leadership with technology initiatives in enrollment and academic services.
 - c. Promote the strength of the Association by periodic review of governance and membership.
6. Expand AACRAO's leadership in the global higher education community.
 - a. Expand professional development opportunities for the international admissions and credential evaluation professionals, engage with institutional leadership to create research opportunities, and identify best practices for enhancing international student enrollment efforts.
 - b. Lead research and evaluation efforts related to global education systems.
 - c. Engage in international initiatives and partnerships whereby AACRAO's collective expertise contributes to a global dialogue and more effective practices in international education, student exchange, and mobility.
7. Ensure the Association's resource strength for current and future AACRAO members.
 - a. Diversify revenue streams to decrease Association fiscal risk.
 - b. Increase net operating revenue to build long-term investments.
 - c. Ensure the prudent use of resources. d. Align resources with goals and objectives for the Association.
8. Aspire to be an intentionally inclusive community that values the unique contributions of others.
 - a. Serve as a strategic leader connecting and advocating for diversity, equity, access, and inclusion within and across higher education.
 - b. Promote an organizational culture that focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice strategies to empower educational leaders.
 - c. Yearly evaluation of our goals and objectives to ensure we remain cognizant of the relationship between access, equity, diversity, and inclusion as it relates to all activities of the association.